The Country Church and Rural Welfare

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International committee of Young men's Christian associations.
The country church and rural welfare

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Edited by

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
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INTRODUCTION

The County Work Department of the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations consists of a committee of business men and five secretaries. We have our Secretary Emeritus, Robert Weidensall. I do not know how we could get along without him, because he is the one we go to for help at all times. He was the founder of County Work. One secretary is in charge of the general administration of the department. Our Religious Work secretary is devoting most of his time to the Men and Religion Forward Movement this year, so he can hardly be accredited as working with us. Our Secretary for Rural Health and Recreation is outlining and developing a plan for the education of country boys and young men along these lines. Besides these we have one man giving his time to research and editorial work.

Now there are sixty-eight State and county secretaries and several thousand volunteer

workers scattered over this broad continent who are coming in contact with thousands of men and boys and with rural conditions as they really exist. These men meet many problems and in their effort to solve these problems they confer with the State secretaries and International secretaries, who often help to find solutions. Our secretaries visit the local fields traveling sometimes 50,000 miles in a year. We are at times bewildered by the very extent of the work. The problems cover a wide area and many subjects, and the topics are multiplied each year. It is for this reason that these papers have been collected—to give permanence to the words of men who are experts in their line that they may shed some light on the solution of these problems as they come to the International office. We read in the papers a great deal about the magnificent work being done by the Agricultural Department at Washington. We see as we travel through the country, through the West especially, the evidences of the expenditure of large sums of money. It is an active department. They are doing a great deal to

spread abroad the knowledge of how to conserve the resources of our land, so far as agriculture is concerned.

We see through our towns and our cities, especially through the West, where it was my privilege to travel this last summer, that one of the most conspicuous buildings is the schoolhouse; a large building, modern and up-to-date. Now twenty or thirty years ago, we used to have school teachers, who, as the expression goes, "made failures in other things" and had "a little learning," and so went out to try it on the farmers' children!

Today we have scattered through our States normal schools and colleges preparing people for this field of service, but our secretaries report that although there is a great deal done for education and a great deal of labor expended in the development of the industries, they find little evidence of an effort to develop and train men to conserve the spiritual side of our country life. We have collected in this volume the contributions of men representing agricultural schools and colleges, and theological seminaries, and also

the views of country pastors, all of whom have joined in the effort to make clear the needs of the country and of the people living in the country and the best way to meet these needs so that our secretaries can go out and put their shoulder to the wheel and help intelligently and effectively. The motto of County Work is "Coöperation." We try to coöperate with all the things that are good. We sometimes coöperate with things that do not, in all respects, stand for the best, as, for instance, the county fairs and State fairs; but we find it easier to turn the tide in the right direction by coöperation than by antagonism.

—*D. Hunter Mc Alpin, M. D.*

I

IS THE FUNDAMENTAL FUNCTION OF THE RURAL CHURCH THEOLOGICAL OR SOCIOLOGICAL?

It certainly is the irony of fate for a theological professor to be confronted by a question like this, especially when he is expected to say that it is not theological, and put himself out of business. Yet our difficulty is mainly a matter of definition. If I were to answer this question off-hand, as I answered it to myself, when I first read it over, I should say, the country church is neither theological nor sociological; it is religious. On the other hand, if the term theological is broadened to mean what it ought to mean, then the Church's function is both theological and sociological. If the term social is to apply to the full breadth of human nature and its needs, then the function of the country church is fundamentally sociological.

I shall propose one statement as a test. I believe that *the country church must be a*

community-serving church, not a self-serving church. If you apply this principle to all these questions you will find that it will greatly help. A country church must obey Christ's three great social principles — love, service and sacrifice. Has the country church always done that? We know it has not. We know that every country church that has succeeded and is succeeding is obeying these three great laws; and if it is a failure, that is because it is not willing to love all its neighbors, it is not willing to serve the whole community, it is not willing to sacrifice for the sake of the community and for the sake of the larger interests of the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. *"Is the Church a social institution under the operation of sociological law?"* The traditional answer here, I think, would be, "No, the Church is a *religious* rather than a *social* institution." And of course, from the traditional viewpoint, the country church is quite theological in aim and purpose, and not sociological at all. I should, of course, agree with any one who says the Church is a religious institution;

but I should immediately challenge him when he says the statement of that fact is an answer to this question. The Church is a special institution used in the providence of God for the regeneration of human souls. But that does not mean that it is not a social institution too. Any institution in this world must be a social institution of course. It has to do with men in mutual relations and is under the operation of social law, just as all institutions must be. The Church as an institution can be no exception to this rule.

2. *"Is social regeneration merely the sum total of individual regeneration?"* This question is fundamental to our discussion. It involves the definitions of the social gospel and of "the simple gospel," so-called. The people who have not yet seen the social vision would answer this question in the traditional way, "If you save people individually, you will save society"; and they would doubtless do so conscientiously. If you really save the individual, of course you save the lost, but there is something more than the saving of the individual. Rauschenbusch puts it very clearly when he says, "There are two

great entities in human life, the human soul and the human race, and religion is to save both." Yet we have been putting in our efforts, as churches, almost wholly to save the individual, and letting the social situation go by; as if we were living in an individualistic age which needed only the individualistic gospel. Doubtless there are some who would say: "Saving the individual is all that is essential. If a man really gets right with God, he will live in right relations both with God and his fellow man. He will maintain his Christian character. He will serve his community and his generation; and the environment will be changed with the man."

Yes, that is the theory. We *hope* that it is true. It is our natural expectation, and we take the results for granted. But let us face the facts, and we shall often find that they do *not* bear out the assumption. We often find that after a revival there is a great waste, a great reaction; there is not thorough conservation of results. What causes this very common experience? It is often due to moral gravitation, the down-drag of an

environment that is not redeemed. The redemption of the environment of the soul is necessary. The social conditions of our cities and villages must be improved to give human souls a fair chance to live in the light. One great argument, it seems to me, for emphasizing social redemption is that social redemption is necessary to conserve the spiritual results of the "simple gospel itself." I believe in evangelism, sane, personal evangelism; but I believe it is a great pity to allow the results to be lost because you do not follow them up meanwhile with the social redemption of your city or village. The emphasis on social regeneration would seem to me to be quite justified, even from the personal angle alone. Yet the question is far broader than this. The cause of social betterment rightly claims the support of every Christian who prays "Thy Kingdom come." We should claim this world for God and redeem it.

3. *"Is there any essential difference between coöperation of the Church with hospitals, orphans' homes, etc., and with granges, civic improvement associations, athletic*

clubs, etc.?" The question is simple, it seems to me. If hospitals and orphans' homes, etc., are worthy of being coördinated with the work of the city churches, in order to be consistent, you must grant the same right in the country, and must say that country institutions have the right to claim that coordination with the church and the hearty cooperation of the church. Otherwise, you will give the city a right you are not giving to the country. We must claim equal rights for both.

4. *"Is an emphasis on the distinctively religious function of the country church essential to its social activities?"* I believe it is. I have very little faith in a non-religious social movement in the country, whether in the open country or the village. I believe that we must give a distinctly religious trend and aim, purpose and impulse and power to all of our social movements in the country. You do not need to be afraid of religion among country people. They are naturally religious. They will take to it, if it commends itself to them as genuine. Many of them distrust sectarianism, however, and

with good reason, for it is the curse of country churches. Sectarianism is not religion, it is merely selfishness in religion. A real religion which makes the world better and more brotherly is always welcome in the country.

As I was speaking the other day to an audience of men in a city in Canada, many of them socialists and the rest anti-socialists, I summed up my whole argument here: "Christianity must be socialized and socialism must be Christianized." Likewise the religion of the country church must be socialized and the sociology of the country church must be Christianized. And when you try the two together you have a winning gospel which is nothing less than the full-orbed social gospel of Jesus Christ. No Christian should believe so thoroughly and so insistently in the individual gospel that he cannot see the social vision. The individualist is right so far as he goes; but his gospel is only a hemisphere. I accept all that he accepts and more. The social gospel of Jesus is the good news of salvation for the individual, *plus* the reorganization of society on the

Christian basis. The social gospel is not a minor phase of God's Good News. It is the whole thing. It is the sphere which includes God's great plan both for individuals and for the world in which they live.

Having attempted to answer briefly these questions I wish to make five constructive suggestions. I believe they are the *five ultimate factors* in the problem of the country church:

1. A re-direction, a new socializing of the country community, based on a new agricultural prosperity and a true social spirit.

2. A leadership adequately trained and decently paid. We must have a permanently loyal country ministry for life.

3. Real church coöperation, with local federation everywhere and elimination often; ultimately abolishing sectarianism, city luxury and social crime.

4. A broader vision of service for the country church, both in function and scope. Let it be a community-wide service for community building; an unselfish service meeting every neglected need.

5. A vital, masculine lay leadership, dis-

covered, developed and trained. It is through the coöperative leadership of laymen, trained to their tasks, that the rural church will become able to survive the curse of short pastorates and make long ones effective.

There are five persistent and difficult factors, which I commend as subjects for constructive discussion. Each of them is a serious problem within the problem, like Ezekiel's "wheel within wheels." Many a strong church in the country has found its way to usefulness by meeting squarely one or more of these ultimate issues. The church that meets and solves them all will be the model country church of the future which will usher in the new day when the Open Country shall again become a paradise. Even a city man must confess that the Garden of Eden is strictly rural!

—*Professor G. Walter Fiske.*

Discussion

THE CHURCH IS FUNDAMENTALLY SOCIAL

There is a prevalent idea that the Christian man, having received his knowledge of God, goes out into the country community to find there what he is to do. Now the Christian Church gathers Christian men into itself in order that they may constitute a social organization. The Church itself is a social institution. It is the central and fundamental social institution. It has distinctive social functions. It conducts the worship of the community. That worship is the gathering up of the ideals of the community expressed by individuals and further inculcated by the teachings of the pulpit. Therefore, we do not take the Christian religion and go into the community to find what needs improvement, but the Christian religion organizes itself into a fellowship, a body of like-minded men, associated together in a social institution. Now a social institution must have social functions; it must find its relation to the entire life of the community. On the

divine side it is of course open to the vision of God, and should be full of the presence and power of God, but I cannot conceive it as not being itself a fundamental social expression.—*Rev. Wilbert L. Anderson, D. D.*

SALVATION AND SERVICE

We preachers have been converting people and forgetting that the Kingdom is the end. I heard of an Irishman who went out on a windy day and tried to light his pipe. He struck two or three matches and they all went out and he only had one more left. Then he buried his shoulders in a snow drift and struck the last match and lighted his pipe and the match still burned — it burned and burned and he threw it down on the snow and it still burned and it burned clean down to the end. Then he looked at his pipe and his pipe had gone out.

—*Dr. Warren H. Wilson.*

SOCIETY THE SUM OF ITS UNITS

It seems to me that individual regeneration and social regeneration are identical. Society is made of units and individuals. The regeneration of the individual, being the

work of God, accomplishes the regeneration of society; and it is all the work of God and none of it the work of the Church, except as God uses the Church to bring men to a knowledge of Jesus Christ and the atonement of Jesus Christ and His saving power. No man can save a man, but God can use a man in the process of saving men and social regeneration in my mind is the work of God saving individuals in multitudes. I do not see how you can distinguish the two operations as though they were different in character.— *Dr. W. Russell Collins.*

HOW SHALL THE CHURCH BE RELATED TO THE FIELD?

I have been reading the Life of John Frederick Oberlin of Waldersbach. One will go far to find a more interesting exposition or a better exemplification of what the minister can do for the betterment of his country parish, along agricultural, economic, social and educational lines, than in this narrative of Oberlin's long life and work in the Alsatian Mountains more than a hundred years ago.

I was a country pastor once in an old-fashioned Presbyterian church. I also was engaged in library work, club work, playground promotion and various other sociological efforts; but my problem was how to bring the church and these other things together. I could not bring these things to bear actively on my church life. Was it desirable? We need light not only on the question of sociological work in the country but on the distinctive relation of the country church to social problems. Can the country church, as a church, do anything, or can the country church only supply with altruistic motive the people who will do betterment work along various lines as individuals, or in association with organizations other than the church?—*Rev. Paul Martin.*

SHOULD NON-CHRISTIANS BE CHOSEN AS LEADERS?

I am a radical on the theological side. Some one came to me the other day and asked me if I did not want a certain man in town to have charge of a Boys' Club. The proposed leader seldom darkens the door of

a church, and so far as I know has no public religious life. How is that man going to lift the boys? Are they going to be lifted by their boot straps? Unless the leader can stand before his boys as a profound believer in Jesus Christ I do not understand his function. It seems to me that the social side of this question is being emphasized so much that we are losing sight of the fact that we cannot regenerate society unless we have something above ourselves to pull us up. Merely organizing clubs and societies in the rural community does not necessarily mean that boys and girls by coming together in groups have higher ideals or better motives. We need to inject the Christian spirit and ideals into our work.

Theology is a " speaking concerning God " and if we are working for the regeneration of the community, I know of no better way to do it than to make our work " theological."

—Arthur O. Pritchard.

SOME THINGS THAT CAN BE DONE

The remark has often been made that country life is godless. It is, to some extent.

The King's Library

I have had some experience for five and a half years in a rural district. How are we going to get God into country life? It is largely by getting God into every vital concern of the community. I will give an illustration. In our town we had a good many places that sold liquor illegally, permitted gambling, etc. We got a few men together and we closed down over twenty-four places. We have done other things. We have carried out some of the suggestions of the rural life movement. As a result the men who were alienated from the Church and thought the Church did not mean much to the country, are coming back into the Church and they are getting God into their lives.

Even as to the leader that is not distinctly Christian at present, it may be well worth while, if he has a good strong character, to try him and give him the Boys' Club, and as he works with the boys he will begin to realize the need of a religious life. We tried something in our own county in Vermont with a man who was not religious at all, but was given a definite task to do along moral and ethical lines. That man is get-

ting interested in the church and is becoming more and more interested in distinctly religious things.

—*Rev. J. A. Scheuerle.*

A TEACHER THAT LEARNED THINGS

Some one has said that we ought to take a man whether he is a believing Christian or not and give him a severe trial before making him a leader. That hits me. Two or three years ago when our Association was contemplated it seemed as if there were no leader in the community and I myself was not a Christian, but Mr. Pipher prevailed on me to do what I could for the boys. We organized and for two and a half years we went along in a sort of haphazard way. The superintendent of our Sunday-school, who is a member of the Boys' Work Committee, Mr. Rosevear, also enlisted my services in the Sunday-school and for about a year I was a teacher in the Sunday-school and I was teaching the boys something that I knew nothing about myself. About six months ago in our Sunday-school one afternoon the superintendent asked for all the teachers

who were praying for their students to get on their feet and I was the only one that did not do so, but if he were to ask now I should be the first one to get on my feet because I now see the light. We are organizing the boys, over in our community, with the help of Mr. Hart, by giving them something hard to do and if our boys are going to do anything in the community I believe it is because we are keeping them busy. Give them something to do, something of importance. Give them a real man's job. We are now starting a series of afternoon meetings and I believe if we cannot get the young men to go to the church we can get them into the hall which we rent and if they will not come to Christ we will take Christ to them. We are enlisting good speakers, men of fire, and we are not asking them to come to the church. We are having the meetings in the hall where they feel they are at liberty to come and I believe we are going to do a big work in our little community.

—*Raymond Spargo.*

A NEEDY PARISH

I come originally from a community where theological individualism has been emphasized in revivals until we have folks like the man who came to a minister of a certain denomination in Boston and asked alms of him, claiming to be a member of his denomination. In response the minister handed him a dollar, saying: "I see you are a member of my denomination all right, because you have worn your knees out praying and the seat of your pants out backsliding." I come from a community where that kind of individualism has been emphasized, and I think we have about as many sinners there now as we ever had. On one of my visits to the home neighborhood, a man described a certain local minister as one that did not have enough get-up in him to eat fried chicken. I made another visit and just about the time I reached my brother's home, an old neighbor committed suicide. He did it because of a lack of income and because of general misfortune. There was no community agency to give him help

in his isolation and need. At a rural factory town, I saw twelve boys playing craps in the light of a lantern on the porch of the post office and store, and that also showed the absence of any social solidarity — the kind that would have given those boys better training. I visited a farmer who was at one time superintendent of a Sunday-school — he had held that position for twenty years; his wife lost her reason because of the pressure brought about by the lack of money to pay the interest on a mortgage. The farm had been advertised for sale because of unpaid taxes; there had been drought for three summers. That man's situation was due possibly to a lack of social solidarity, strong enough to help him out of a present difficulty.

Later on in the evening a farmer told me of a country minister who was so intoxicated when he made a pastoral call that he could not ask the blessing at table. When he went to bed he took the wrong overcoat with him, leaving his own which on examination was found to contain a flask of whiskey. Now that is the situation in a community where

we have had this kind of individualism emphasized for a hundred years. We have been fumigating the individual instead of getting rid of the disease. We need to emphasize both, but we need to do the business of sterlizing the water supply or controlling it by the community, so that the energy a man puts forth in boiling the water for himself may be better expended in some other economic occupation.

—*Professor Edwin L. Earp.*

EVANGELISM NEEDED

After having lived for over seventeen years in the West I have been amazed on my return to the East to find the condition of some of the rural districts what they are. We need missionaries certainly in the East today and perhaps more than we need them in the West. The attitude of many men in the average rural community is really terrible, and I think that while I accept the view of Dean Fiske, as of course we all must, so far as it regards the need of a better environment both physical and moral, there is an even greater need of what may be called in a strict

sense the religious and spiritual environment, which only the preaching of the Gospel and Church memberships can supply. In some small communities and inland districts, there are men who are losing their idea of God; consequently there is the greatest possible need of a very strong evangelism addressed to the individual conscience. Men are losing their idea of the nature of God, and of their relation to God, out of which grows the sense of moral duty, the sense of obligation. It has brought to me a great awakening to come back to the old home country here in the East, after living as a missionary in the West, to find communities going to seed, and men apparently losing their idea of God.

None of us would have this social spirit and interest in human betterment, unless we had first sat down at the feet of Jesus; and if, as a Church, we want to make communities better, we cannot afford to neglect the individual soul. I am in sympathy with any effort to improve the condition of our rural communities — better roads, better schools, better everything, but I do not believe in the

Church abandoning her primary mission.
—*Rev. A. P. Gesner.*

THEOLOGY IN ACTION

The fundamental problem of the rural church is neither sociological nor theological. It seems to me that we have been over-emphasizing theology and we can over-emphasize sociology. I have found in country communities not a non-religious attitude — that is, men and women are strictly religious, but the religion is not practical. It is not Christian in the best sense of the term. A great many of the men of the country community use the name of God in vain. They have a certain theological knowledge of God but what they need is to put Christianity into practice, to make it a living thing, and if that can be done sociologically, then I should say the sociological point of view is the right view to take. Neither view should be ignored. On the one hand I feel that in the religious services of the church the country community needs to get down to practical things. Men are intensely interested in practical things, for they have to make ends meet

in an economical way. When it comes to Christianity we pastors ought to get down on our hands and knees, so to speak, man with man, showing a personal interest in our fellows and helping them to take a personal interest in God. Vital Christianity must work itself out in the lives of the people. And then on the other hand we must take a divine Father who knows and loves and cares for the common interests of His people right into the homes and hearts of men and women wherever we find them. Let us be done with theorizing and get to realizing and making good our Christianity.

—*Rev. James P. Gillespie.*

ELIMINATION OF THE UNFIT

I wish, in a word, to inject a third element into this scheme of improvement, along with converting of the individual and bettering the surroundings of the individual. Following the discovery of Mendel, a German monk, in the field of heredity, the suggestion has arisen that we consider the elimination, scientifically and effectively, from the network of human heredity of its worst

dross, in the form of feeble-mindedness and inherited tendency to evil. This would make it possible when once accomplished, wholly or in part, to have only normal individuals to be converted and to be subjected to a social environment cleaner, stronger, better in every way, in which it would be easier to live successfully.—*Hon Willet M. Hays.*

WHO ARE THE UNFIT?

Something should be said, I think, supplementary to the foregoing. It is also true that a man, woman or child who is called "feeble-minded" can make religious advancement to a certain stage. I happened at one time, to be living very near to a "feeble-minded" institution in Minnesota, and I was very much interested to find there that some of these men and women, who were really children in mind, were further advanced in religion than a great many people who possess their full mental capacity, and they were attentive listeners to the preaching of the gospel. Moreover, some of them knew their Bibles a great deal better than many normal young men and women

know theirs. There is very often in a "defective" the possibility of religious development. There is a soul there. There is a religious conscious there.

—*Rev. A. P. Gesner.*

SUMMING UP

I have simply this final suggestion to offer. I want the reader to think of the relation of a single message of Jesus Christ to the country church — especially in view of the fact that many country churches are going down, all over this country, going down with colors flying, dying from exclusive attention to preaching, hymn singing and praying, and nothing else. The verse that I am thinking of is this: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The country church that exalteth itself shall be abased, but the country church that humbleth itself in generous, unselfish, sacrificial service of its community shall be exalted.

I have convictions on this question. I believe profoundly that until the country church does broaden its vision of unselfish service

it is on the way to death. Community service of course means an extension of program and of effort for many a church, and many of the country pastors are avoiding it. They fear it because it does mean so much work. But it is the opportunity for their own salvation and the salvation of their church through sheer usefulness. It seems to me that they ought to welcome the chance. Certainly we should rejoice in the fact that we have churches and pastors like Mr. McNutt and his people who have illustrated this so splendidly, and have gained a new success and a new vitality in their work by the appreciation of all the needs of the community. I believe that this principle is perfectly sound: *A church should take an inventory of its social surroundings, find out where the gaps are in the social structure, and then fill the gaps.* Let it work indirectly, by inspiration and guidance as far as possible; but never shirk its responsibility.

—*Professor G. Walter Fiske.*

Review

This subject may be reviewed in certain of

its important aspects by considering the following questions:

1. Is the church a social institution under the operation of the sociological law?

2. Is social regeneration the sum total of individual regeneration?

3. Is there any essential difference between coöperation of the church with hospitals, orphans' homes and granges, civic improvement associations, athletic clubs, etc.?

4. Is an emphasis of the distinctively religious function of the country church essential to its social activities?

1. In answer to the first question, "Is the church a social institution under the operation of sociological law?" I call attention to the fact that the church is the only institution in the country save one, which has survived. It has proven its social fitness by continued existence in the country, when so many of the forms of social and economic life have been destroyed by reason of economic pressure and change.

The church is a social institution, and, like all other institutions, subject to the operation of natural laws. For instance, the investi-

gations made in the Department of Church and Country Life have demonstrated that the church in the country is delicately responsive to the experience of the people in getting a living. The fact that the church in the country is dominated by economic conditions, shaped by them and in many cases destroyed by them, is a sufficient answer, I think, to this question. Like all other social institutions, the church in the country is at the mercy of the people's economic experience. This is not to say that the individual Christian is so subject, but the church in which he is a member is made or is broken by the experience of the community in getting a living.

2. Is social regeneration the sum total of individual regeneration? Taking the largest view of the question, I do not know. The word regeneration is used here in two senses. For all practical purposes, however, the answer is "No." Individual regeneration is effected by the work of God and not directly by the work of man at all. Speaking as a social student, one can only say that Christian theologians agree that regeneration

of the individual is an act of God, beyond the reach of human intelligence. For that reason, telling the gospel story is an easy task! The responsibility of saving souls is with God; it cannot be transferred to the preacher, however faithful. Social regeneration, on the other hand, is the work of man. It is man's best approach to the regeneration of the soul. We can trace the regeneration of a community or of a state and weigh its causes; there is nothing mysterious about it. It is a working out of natural laws. There is every reason to believe that with a little more knowledge our ability to analyze the regeneration of such a country as Denmark — which has been accomplished in less than sixty years — would enable to us to account for every cause and to locate every effect as precisely as in a chemical reaction.

3. There *is* a great difference between the coöperation of the church with hospitals or orphan homes and the coöperation of the church with granges, civic associations, athletic clubs, etc. It is the difference between the old static religion and the new dynamic

religion, which we call social service. A hospital is for the healing of the sick; an orphanage is an institution to repair the waste and stop the destruction of a family. Neither of them is calculated to *improve* the human species. At the best, they preserve the status of human life, but social and recreative enterprises like the grange, the county Young Men's Christian Association, the village improvement society, the consolidated school, are *constructive* in their character. They are intended to improve the species. Such work is dynamic rather than static. This distinction is vital to all the work we are considering. We are undertaking moral construction. The close social relations of modern life render this possible. So long as mankind was dispersed over this wide continent and communities were centrifugal, owing to the amount of free land and the abundance of economic opportunities leading men to go out from one another to possess and conquer the earth, it was impossible to improve mankind. Social service was mere rescue work, the saving of the lost and the lifting up of the fallen. We are con-

fronted in the Association and in the common schools, at their best development, with enterprises which are building up the human race and improving the species.

As a partial answer to questions often raised, I want to tell about a country church in Florida, N. Y. The men's club in that church has a large public spirit. It has discussed, proposed and effected the lighting of the streets of the town. It laid plans for the organization of a bank, much needed in a prosperous town about half of whose business is done by Polish immigrants. This bank, conceived in the Presbyterian Church, was brought to life by the coöperation of Presbyterians with Polish Catholics. These hard-working immigrants realized the value for the growing community of a banking institution. It is interesting to recall that the leader of the men's club which thus served the community, was the town blacksmith, who had for fifty years shod the horses and mended the wagons of the town, and who knew every man, horse and dog in a radius of ten miles. This man had never been a member of the church until the men's club

in the old church of the community undertook the study of community problems and the solution of them. The last three years of his life were his best years, in which he used his abundant knowledge and social sympathy in the service of the church, of which he became a member.

4. In the fourth place, it is my belief that emphasis on the distinctively religious function of the country church is the most essential factor in its social activity. I am convinced that the prayer of the individual in his own room, and the worship of the community in public are vital and are central in social service. We do not know everything. Indeed we do not know much; the boundaries of our social knowledge are quickly passed. In all this work we are dealing with a great mystery; but we have enough knowledge to discover the working of God in the social change about us. We know this, that the most divinely inspired institution we have is the most sensitive to social change and the most responsive to social progress — that is, the Church.

Above all, we must recognize the necessity

for a dynamic spirit, a spirit of power. This will come to men chiefly as a result of the sense of God. I think it is in part due to fear, to dependence and to the desire for the satisfaction of common needs. These emotions arise out of economic experience. They are the sources of religious experience, that is, of prayer and of worship; and these economic experiences, which are the sources of social experiences, are also the sources of religious feeling.

If this be true, it is profoundly important to keep worship and prayer at the center of all social work. This is the reason why I, for my part, believe in the Church, and I believe not so much in any of these good works the Church should do, as I believe in the function of worship which is her great task, and the ministry of prayer which must be the atmosphere of all of her work in all time.

—*Dr. Warren H. Wilson.*

II

STANDARDS OF RELIGIOUS TEACHING

I believe we ought not to be in too great a hurry to get at direct results. As dean of a theological seminary I am working out as well as I can the problem of the education of the minister. I feel that there is too much insistence that the minister shall be trained for the specific work which he is going to do — that we should take time to tell each man exactly how he is to carry on a religious conversation with some devout woman who is in the midst of trouble. Now I do not believe it is worth while to do this, if we can, but we ought to carry the student through a course of religious thought and religious life which will enable him to talk to that woman in a helpful way when he is actually with her.

Does " He that would save his life shall lose it " apply to the Church as well as to individuals? I would say a loud " Amen " to

the contention that it does. I believe in the universality of ethical law. There has been progress in our thought about this moral law. New conditions create new relationships, so we state our thought about morals in different ways at different times. There is progress in the application of ethical principles. You may read the ethical treatises of a hundred years ago and you will not find specific teachings concerning your duty in some modern situations, as when you are standing in the doorway of a crowded trolley car; yet there is a chance right there for the application of our ethics.

The country life of today is not just what it was twenty-five years ago, but the country community itself does not altogether know it, nor do the city people, nor do the theological professors. We see it in some particulars, but it is true in a dozen ways in which we do not see it. The country church needs to realize that its religion and morality can be applied in many new ways, different from the ways in vogue twenty-five years ago. There is a moral impulse which has come into our social life and which must be

brought into the life of the Church, which is not merely that of individuals but that of the community.

Our question, whether an ethical principle applies to an institution as well as to an individual, raises one as to the nature of institutions themselves. They are not merely aggregations of men, but they are composed of men who have come together for certain definite purposes. Just as soon as I accept membership in any society — and even more when I accept an official relationship to that society — my responsibility is something other than an individual one; and in the Church, there is something more than individual responsibility. An institution can act only with the coöperation of those who constitute it; but those who compose its membership have not full liberty of action as isolated and unrelated individuals. They are limited in their action by the institutional life, a fact which it is important for us to take into account. So the social and moral responsibilities of the Church do not come from its status as an impersonal institution, nor from duties of the individuals who as an

aggregation make up its membership; they come rather from an institution which blends in with its own corporate functions all those operations that manifest the moral, social and religious responsibilities of the individuals who are themselves under the influence of the institutional life of the Church.

—Dean William H. Allison.

Discussion

THE APPEAL FOR THE STRONG COUNTRY MINISTER

I am interested in theological education and the sociological side in the theological seminary; and the problem of standards of teaching in reference to the country church problem is a very vital one it seems to me. One of the questions that came up at an inter-seminary conference in New Haven was that of the sources from which we draw ministerial students. It was shown there that the majority of men for the ministry heretofore have come from the country districts, and that we are having now a falling off in members there. It is not only the country, however, that is failing to supply

its men. We are not drawing from classes represented in various industrial groups. Now, the standards of teaching with reference to the country church will have to do with the character of the men who undertake the rural church problem.

I have been through a theological seminary and have studied others. There has been practically no appeal made to strong men, who have come out of the country, to take up the country church problem as a life work. Professor Fiske tells me that he has been teaching rural sociology since the beginning of last year and I hope to do the same next year. I believe that, because of the popular movement to the large towns and cities, there has been a great change in the character of the men available for country work. Even mothers may hesitate to pray that their sons be made ministers on the kind of income they are likely to get. I should not wish my boy to become a minister of a type now common in the country. I met a mother in the country the other day who said: "I am getting bitter because I have more work in my home than I ever had."

There were four children —two boys and two girls — who are old enough and bright enough to help her. The oldest girl had just gone away to teach school. Now I say religious teaching somewhere ought to inspire somebody to help that mother during these years when her age is coming on and she has less help in the home than she had at any time in her life. I say the Church of today should inspire some one in that home to help that mother so that some day she will at least have a rest, and a better time in her home instead of a bigger task in her old age. I should like to have something get into our theological education — which too seldom directs men to the country church — to produce a conviction in men that the young candidate for country parishes is volunteering for a great service, a bigger job for a man than almost any field of today. The hardest fields the Church has to work are the lost home field, and one of them is the country district. I think we can educate men to develop what I call a social center for the Church rather than the circuit system. I would illustrate that from one community

I know about where there is a central church with four chapels that would correspond to a Methodist circuit. The central life of that whole community is in the central church where a big congregation assembles every Sunday morning. So when a young woman gets a new Easter bonnet, or a young man a new side-bar buggy, even the motive of display can be sanctified and given a religious significance.

—*Professor Edwin L. Earp.*

THE SMALLER COMMUNITIES ARE NOT SENDING OUT MEN

I am vitally interested in the problem of leaders for the country church. In addition to my work as a pastor I am secretary of an organization known as the New Jersey Baptist Educational Society, and for the last ten years I have supervised every year the training of between thirty and forty young men and women who are preparing for religious work. Quite recently I went over the matter of the character of the community which furnished these young people and discovered that the average country church is

not sending out as many men for the ministry nor for any other kind of religious work as is usually supposed. At this moment I cannot recall that the number was above three for that period. It is increasingly evident that in New Jersey the bulk of the men who enter the ministry come from churches in communities of between 15,000 and 50,000 population. If my experience counts for anything it would indicate that the country churches are not furnishing the same quota of ministers that they did half a century or less ago. But wherever there is a strong vigorous rural church which stands well and has evidence of power, possessing real strength and gripping the community problem, there we find young men who are impressed with the opportunities that open for religious and social service.*

—*Rev. Frank A. Smith.*

DIFFICULTIES IN ADJUSTING COURSES

I was born in the country, taught in a country church, my pastorate began in a rural

*This situation may be local in view of the fact that the percentage of the population living in rural districts is unusually small in New Jersey.

church, my friends and relatives are largely in such churches, and I spend my summers among them. I feel, therefore, that although I am a professor in a theological seminary, I have an interest in our rural problem.

My reply to many of the criticisms of seminaries is that I do not know of any one of them that does not teach Sociology and Ethics; I do not know of any in which the professors do not get together in deep earnestness to inquire what they can do to fit their students for both city and rural work. Every seminary in the land has changed its curriculum from A to Z in the last ten years, adjusting itself to our changing conditions.

But there are great difficulties that the outsider is quite liable to overlook. We put a student through a very well chosen course for city life, he goes out into a city pastorate and if he has not the sort of timber in him to succeed there and drifts into a rural field better adapted to his temperament, then all his sociology of a special sort is wasted, so far as it has any practical application to his field. Another man says, "I want to be

fitted for rural work." We give him the best we can for that work. He goes into the country and makes a success. Immediately some city church calls him into the city and he has the whole problem of the city to learn. What we did for him in country training must be laid aside. It is no easy task for a seminary to adjust a course to a student's future needs when no one knows where he is to go.

—*Dr. Alvah S. Hobart.*

IS THE COUNTRY CHURCH YET A " BIG MAN'S JOB"?

The hardest word I have heard against the theological seminary is entirely deserved. I believe that until a very recent period, within almost a decade, the seminaries have not been aware of their function or their opportunity. At the same time I think it ought to be recognized that the seminary which today does not teach Christian ethics and sociology is everywhere admitted to be a hopeless back number.

Now the question has been asked — why do not the seminaries engage themselves with

this problem and contribute to its solution? And the responsibility is laid upon the seminary. I want to say this one word on behalf of the seminary. The professor of pastoral theology on whose shoulders the responsibility for this matter would primarily rest is not usually a country man. I myself, teaching in that department, know nothing about the country problem; but I want to know about it. One of the things that has interested me is the fact that the question is so insistent before the minds of Christian workers. They have come to a realization of the practical necessity represented by the word "coöperation."

Now take that other idea which is a splendid one in itself — that we should offer this country work to our young men as a life investment in the way of sacrifice and that we believe that this is a "big man's job." As the situation is at present it isn't a "big man's job" at all. I do not believe that a man of parts who might naturally or reasonably be expected to sacrifice his ambition for the sake of Christ and of the work in the country should be asked to waste his spiritual

energy under the conditions of denominational rivalries and jealousies which now exist. The difficulty lies back of the theological seminary, in the competitive character of the country work.

—Rev. G. A. Foley, D. D.

KEEPING THE STRONG MAN IN THE COUNTRY

I can appreciate the point of view of those men in the theological seminaries who feel that the problem of the country church means something to them because they realize that the country church no longer is the source of supply for the clergy that it used to be. I sympathize with the idea. But the theological seminaries will not take the leadership that they ought to have in this country church problem so long as they place the emphasis on the function of the country church in breeding ministers. It is a legitimate function but not the fundamental thing. I speak of this because that idea of the country as a reservoir for city supply enters into so much of our discussion concerning the rural problem. We want rural people to be good because they are going to the

city. But we must remember that the fundamental rural problem is not that of serving as a supply of body and of brain for the city. That is one of the country's functions and that partly is why the rural problem is a national question. But even more — it is a question of the retention of men and women of the right sort in the country, the building up of the right sort of rural institutions for the sake of the people who stay and not for the sake of the people who go. The trouble with a good many people — I think of many clergymen who go into the country community — is that they have not yet got that point of view.

The Church Must Hold Up An Ideal. It is not the first business, or perhaps not at all the business of the Church to teach agriculture. However, the leadership in the country church ought to appreciate a fact that we cannot get away from — that in thousands of our rural communities a strong church cannot be built up until the economic question has been put ahead toward solution. In other words we have got to have better cattle and corn growing if we are to have

better missions and philanthropy or even a better church. On the other hand we want to remember that, in those rich regions where the problem of cattle and corn has been put forward to economic success, the work of the Church is just as significant and as difficult. My main thought is that a part of the task of the country church is to give both to the poor and to the rich farmers a new conception of the fundamental character of their work. Now the poor and the rich farmers and those who are teaching them better cattle and corn growing have in mind the economic and industrial thought of *profit* and that is all right. But I believe that the country church must hold up as an ideal the thought that this work of cattle and corn growing is not merely, or even first of all, a question of profit, but a means of service. You may say that is a hazy notion, but it represents what has got to be done and it is one of the greatest tasks of the Church. If the country church cannot do that I do not know what else it can do. We must permeate country life, the country institutions, with just this one great thought — Christian

service through the farming business and the upbuilding of the community.

—*President Kenyon L. Butterfield.*

NEED FOR PRACTICAL COURSES

In the country community the Church is in a position where its minister can get under a hundred per cent of the community job. It is a big man's job but the trouble is it has not been tackled as a big man's job. The rural minister needs practical ideas to take home with him into the rural church and into the community. At the Amherst Conference for rural ministers I got more practical working ideas in three days for meeting the vital conditions in my community than I did in my theological course in three years. I got the religious inspiration from my theological course but did not get practical ideas for my job. In the county where I am at work there are about fifty rural ministers. Of these only five or six are undertaking community extension work, endeavoring to solve their rural problem. The others have no idea of what that problem is. It seems to me absolutely essential

that the theological institutions should introduce practical rural sociology in their courses of study, conferring with those who are making great successes along practical and definite lines. Then there would be more ministers coming from the rural church and more ministers going into the rural churches. I would voice with all the feelings I have the deep need of getting practical working ideas into our theological seminaries for rural districts.

—*Rev. J. A. Scheuerle.*

EXTENSION WORK

The suggestion that there should be an attempt to organize study groups or clubs in rural communities, to study the community problem, struck me as being most valuable. The extension work of our state agricultural colleges is coming to be fairly well organized although it is very new. To date, the chief attention has been given to the technical side. But there are being organized departments of agricultural economics in our agricultural colleges and the time is not far distant when there will be men at these institutions who

can map out courses of reading and study and who can even give correspondence courses and lecture courses along the line of community work. All this is part of one of the most profound educational movements of the time, so far as it relates to our rural life. We have extension schools and many other schemes which are utilizing the service of our agricultural college for technical and business ends. In my judgment the next great step in our agricultural education is a plan which handles the community problem in just the same way. Hence the people in the rural communities should give more consistent thought and systematic study to the problems of the community as well as to the problems of the home and of the farm.

—*President Kenyon L. Butterfield.*

COUNTRY EDITOR VS. TRAINED PREACHER

At Amherst, I received more from the courses of lectures than from the conference. The testimony of other ministers there was similar. It was generally acknowledged that the central difficulty with the country church lies in wrong training of the average minis-

ter. He is trained for the city. His ideal is the city. Everything centers in the city — nothing in the country.

I met a country minister on Broadway and the last thing he said to me was that some day he expected to land in a New York church or to have a field near by. Half a dozen country ministers have expressed the same sentiment in my hearing recently.

On returning from the Amherst conference, I happened to have a conversation with a certain country editor. I realized at once that here was a man who saw the community as a unit and entered into all its interests, good and bad. On the whole he was trying to build it up, and had an ideal for it which he was trying to " carve in the marble real."

While he was familiar with all the community institutions and their politics and policies, and considering carefully the effect of all that was going forward, the ministers of the place have all felt, probably, that their position and understanding was superior to, and broader than, his. His education does not compare with theirs when it comes to the classics and theory, but in practical value as

a community leader, he continually outgenerals them all, and initiates, or at least assists, a good part of what is going on.

One difficulty with the Church and the ministry is that there is a continual insistence upon being *the leader,* instead of *a worker* with the rest of the community institutions and their members. So long as this attitude continues there can be little sympathy and understanding and confidence between the different factors. There must be a democratic, rather than an aristocratic, spirit manifested. It is no longer a question of finding a few men who have money, but of giving everybody a chance to work for the great end, namely the Kingdom of God.

The key to the country church situation is the same that Christ used. He looked upon every man, institution, activity, or interest in the community as an important part of the problem, or as means to the great end — the Kingdom — the ideal and ultimate community. He looked upon a marriage-feast, a street incident, the play of children, the attitude toward women, the condition of the poor, and a thousand other matters, as all

having a significant bearing on the main problem. He devoted most of His time and attention and divine energy to these matters which the Church and ministry are too apt to look upon as side issues, or by-products, only distantly related to the problem, while he considered them to constitute the problem itself, and religious instruction as a light upon it. These elements were not incidental to the Gospel; they were the Gospel.

—*Rev. Charles F. Taylor.*

GOD AND CAESAR

"Is it essential that the Church should inspire men to better work in cattle and corn growing as in missions and philanthropy?" This is nothing but the raising of the old question as to the distinction between the secular and the religious. For convenience we may make a distinction between them. Yet we remember what Jesus said when they brought to Him the question about the tribute money — how He asked them to show Him the penny and then spoke those words so pregnant with meaning, "Render unto

Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Caesar stands far above us. We idealize Caesar and that which he stands for. Caesar represented almost the acme of human thought in the direction of human authority — grandeur, majesty, sovereignty. "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." No, we have not yet met our human responsibilities. But is God nothing but a Caesar of a little bigger stature? Do we have the rule of three here? Do we paraphrase this, "The individual is to Caesar as Caesar is to God?" Is not an infinite factor introduced in the mere mention of God? Is not God infinitely above Caesar, though Caesar may represent the height of human authority? It seems to me, therefore, that we come to the essential principle here. Let us do unto our fellow men what we ought to do unto them. Let us not forget to render unto Caesar whatever is his due. But let us also remember that there is this religious message, infinitely higher than the first member of the parallel, but inseparably connected with it. Sociology will never save the

world, but when has God withdrawn Himself from the social life of men?

—Dean William H. Allison.

Review

The question of interest here is whether Christian teaching by the responsible organizations should be widened to include the discussion of principles and doctrines pertaining to those social matters which we all agree to be of fundamental importance in the rural problem. The question is whether the theological seminary, the Christian Church, the Young Men's Christian Association and other definitely organized religious bodies should broaden their teaching to cover economic and social topics.

1. A new rural community requires redirection and new application of ethical principles. These adjustments cannot be made hastily. There must be protracted study and experiment, and there is a call for additional instruction, in theological seminaries and Young Men's Christian Association Training Schools, for a better educational use of the pulpit and other agencies, including,

especially, personal leadership and local organizations.

We are concerned with community redirection, and there must be somewhere an intelligent understanding of the problems of community life. If anybody is to attempt this task, he must do it intelligently and with an understanding of the principles involved. It is urged that the primary responsibility in this, so far as the Christian Church is concerned, rests upon those who are entrusted with the work of training ministers; that the responsibility comes in turn to the minister in the pulpit; that it belongs also to those who give instruction to Young Men's Christian Association leaders; and that this teaching may be continued in classes and by other local agencies.

2. The Church is more than an aggregation of individuals. It organizes individuals and federates their powers with special reference to the community. There is need of a survey of conditions and forces that a suitable program may be devised and followed.

The first proposition deals with the study

of these forces and principles for the sake of understanding them. This is not speculative science, it is practical science; but this second proposition deals with the same study as yet more imperative because there is an institution of peculiar power available for service in the community.

3. It is a mistake to estimate rural work solely or chiefly from its contribution to the universal Church in ministers, recruits, or resources or from its reënforcement of the cities. The rural community must be conserved and developed for its own values. The church should serve the community, making rural life attractive, holding desirable people in the country, and promoting the happiness and welfare of all the people in every possible way.

4. While religious truths and duties are primary themes of instruction, it is important to apply principles and embody ideals in economic and social life, to the end that here may be an economic basis for the support of the community and a social environment that expresses the Christian Gospel. Ideals are to be embodied in life. Princi-

ples are to be applied in conduct. All this requires careful study and at times systematic and faithful instruction.

5. The Church must learn this new mode of service, and it may follow the new way in the assurance that churches as well as individuals that seem to lose their lives in service shall save them.

The question may arise, Why does this economic and social instruction have rightful place in the religious teaching of the Church and the organizations that are associated with the Church. I think there are four simple answers.

(1.) This new and better human society is a society according to the will of God and the mind of Jesus Christ, and if the Church and these social organizations are in the world to do the will of God and to bring into reality what is according to the mind of Jesus Christ, then here is a great task of the Church — a task to be prosecuted intelligently, scientifically, and with a wisdom that rests upon protracted study.

(2.) A second reason for this is that the Church is concerned with all idealism.

This newly directed society is a social ideal, and as such it concerns fundamentally the Christian Church which conceives everything in the terms of idealism. The Christian minister is not to teach details of a better farming and better social organization so much as he is to inspire in the hearts of all the people the ideal to conduct farming in the best possible way, to build homes that shall be the finest conceivable, to do all things of a social nature in the noblest manner and after the highest conceivable pattern. The Christian Church lifts all things to that beautiful and splendid idealism, and out of that idealism of the Church must come the uplift of the community. It has been said again and again that we cannot do this without the religious forces. We cannot, because it is a work of idealism, and the fostering, the teaching, the developing of Christian ideals is committed to the Christian Church.

(3.) There is, thirdly, a great need, and the Christian Church is animated by the gospel of love. Here are things to be done to help people, to add to their happiness, to enrich their life. We conceive the mission of

the Church in the broad outlines of community development, of human welfare, of human well-being, of human good. Now what is the Christian Church for, if it is not to promote human good; and if it is to promote human good, how is it to do this unless instruction is systematically given?

(4.) Last of all there is the urgent and moving thought that we are approaching a great crisis. We know how the subsidence has carried many communities down below the line of comfortable living, of honorable and dignified social order. We know the story of the decadent community, the hopeless family, the degraded men and women, and we know that all of this is a part of the great social and industrial transformation of our times. A colossal movement of history has brought a crisis to many and many a community, and what is the Christian Church for except to help humanity — to help all men safely through great crises. The Christian Church should leap into the gulf of need and rescue the interests involved so far as it is able. It has given me unspeakable satisfaction as a Christian minister that the leaders

of this new social development, who approach the problem from the economic side, have called to the Church, asking it to assume the responsibility, summoning it to leadership, declaring that the Church is the central agency, and that it must come to the rescue. Shall we not heed the call, and shall we not broaden our conception of religious teaching in the Church and in the Young Men's Christian Association and in all our agencies, until we diffuse light and wisdom adequate to the solution of these problems in all definite and practical ways that can be devised?

— *Rev. Wilbert L. Anderson, D. D.*

III

THE CHURCH ITSELF

The Church, being a ministering institution, and, as Professor Fiske says, "the primary agency for human welfare," must stand in close relation to every other institution that aids in community building. The coöperation of the Church with other existing agencies for good is desirable and necessary everywhere, but nowhere more than in the country, because owing to the lack of efficient leadership in the country and the characteristic slowness of country people to move in public enterprises, all rural organization is apt to be loose and ineffective. A country church, therefore, that is awake to its opportunities can be of great service in reviving and helping other institutions to discharge their functions.

The chief business of the Church is, of course, to spread the gospel of Christ throughout the world and to help men live the Christian life. Its members are to be

"the light of the world," "the salt of the earth." The Church must take the lead in giving life the right trend. It must furnish spiritual truth, hope and inspiration through its teaching and preaching.

But as Christ "came not to be ministered unto but to minister," so has the Church a ministering function. It is interested in serving and saving the body and mind of man as well as the soul.

The country church can help in many practical ways to better community life. Rural homes have a great deal to do with community making or breaking. The country church can coöperate with the rural home by teaching it the right relations of family life and by helping to preserve these relations. It can create a religious atmosphere in the home by putting in the hands of the parents a workable, daily Bible study and prayer program. Many country families would be glad to have daily devotions but do not know how to plan them. The pastor and his corps of helpers in their house-to-house visitation can hold up right home ideals if they plan for it. The country church can help to

cultivate in the rural home a taste for good literature, pictures and music by putting the parents in touch with good books, magazines, tracts, pictures, etc. Many rural people do not know where or how these things can be had, or when they are left to make the selections themselves they do not discriminate between what is trashy and what good. Much can be done for the health of rural homes through the rural church, by occasional sermons on health, hygiene and sanitation. In the visitation, too, suggestions may be profitably made along these lines. In the absence of a Board of Health in the country the rural church may save its neighborhood from many a serious blunder — such as failing to take due precautions in cases of contagious diseases, or bad water, or milk supply. Mothers' clubs or child-welfare societies may have their meetings in the church parlors — instructed by the pastor, the pastor's wife — a physician — a nurse — or other competent person. No end of good may come to country homes through country mothers instructed in this way. If the rural church building is a model of neatness and cleanliness — and if

the church grounds are beautified by judicious planting of trees, shrubs, etc., the homes of the parish are apt to follow suit and the aesthetic taste will be thus developed, almost unconsciously. Sermons along these lines would be fruitful of great good.

Country churches are too little interested in the welfare of the rural schools. Christians in the country complain bitterly about their poor schools, while they have never done a thing to better them. Country ministers make the same sorrowful wail and leave the country to seek a city church, where their children may have the advantages of good schools, without ever having preached a sermon on better rural schools or offered a suggestion to a rural teacher or director. The rural church might well be the home of teachers' institutes, and directors' conventions. The church might well plan great popular meetings, addressed by the best educators, for the purpose of stimulating and cultivating a strong, wholesome sentiment. Graduating exercises, school exhibitions and anniversaries could be held with great profit in the rural church.

The country church can coöperate with temperance, civic, and other public welfare agencies by planning popular temperance and patriotic meetings. Frequent sermons should be preached on temperance, patriotism and good citizenship. Christian men in the country should be urged to attend all the primaries and elections, and to vote for men of principle rather than for party. Citizens everywhere should be urged to study the public issues of the day and to be well informed on them. The country church may well put its constituency in touch with literature on this subject. There is no more effective way to coöperate in securing good, clean, effective government — local, county, state or national. The farmers as a rule do not know half enough about civil government and as a result of this they have not a sufficient representation in the government administration. The Church can thus coöperate not only in securing civic righteousness, but when occasion demands, it can also rebuke political corruption and all sorts of evil social and moral practices.

The country church can coöperate in the

social uplift of the rural community by becoming the center of all social activities. There can be no better place from which the social life of a small neighborhood may emanate. The church edifice should be well equipped for work of this kind. Every rural social gathering should be carefully planned with a definite purpose in view. There will be no monotony if this rule is followed and every sociable will be stimulating and helpful. The country church may plan suitable entertainments where there is need for such work. A good lecture course may be conducted by a country church to great advantage. Along with this indoor social and recreational equipment the rural church may establish a recreation park — provided with baseball diamonds, tennis courts, croquet grounds, race course, swings, and grandstand — where a whole community may come for a good time on Saturday afternoons, Fourth of Julys, field days and play festival days. An investment in an enterprise like this will pay large dividends. It is far and away ahead of allowing the young people to drive off to towns and public amusement

parks and pay for commercialized amusement that often has the sting of death in it.

The community pride and the friendships and companionships growing up in and through the activities of the country community play park are sweet and lasting and there is wondrous saving power in them. How many country preachers have ever preached on play? The country people have not yet rightly learned to play together. They have not learned the value of play. The young farmer goes wrong, not while he is following the plow, but after the day's work is over and he puts on his best clothes and goes out for his sport. Then is when he most needs a place to go where he can have his fun and not be contaminated.

The country church is, of course, interested in better farming. It can coöperate with the farmer in securing better agricultural conditions and facilities, by interpreting to him what the new agriculture is and what it will do for him. The country minister should be in close touch with the agricultural college of his state and with the Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C. He

need not necessarily be a master of the science nor need he attempt to teach it. But he ought to be informed on what is being done in the Experiment stations and he ought to know about the many helpful bulletins, and other publications that are issued for farmers and how to get them. He can pave the way for the use of this literature in his parish by referring to it frequently as he has opportunity. He can read and digest some of the most helpful of these farmers' bulletins. He may find good sermon illustrations here. The country minister may inspire boys' corn clubs and contests and farmers' institutes. The church may well open its doors to such clubs and institutes when there is no other suitable place to hold them. One country church, through its Young Men's Bible Class, has started a library which is kept in the lecture room of the church. Books pertaining to agriculture and country life are being put in this country life library. The country church loses nothing by showing its interest in the farmers' material prosperity. It is the fairer way. The country minister is fairer when he shows his sympa-

thy for the farmer in his struggle for a living. And it will not make him a whit the less faithful and efficient as a preacher of the Gospel. He should be very careful, however, in doing this, to leave the impression that better farming is to mean better homes, better schools — better churches, better living conditions — and not "more money to buy more land to raise more corn to feed more hogs to get more money."

Certain things need to be done for people — *must* be done. Every country community needs certain things to be done in it and for it. The Church — being "the primary agency for human welfare" — is ultimately responsible for supplying human needs. For instance, if there is no Board of Health in a country community — active or otherwise — the church must look after the health of the people or cause it to be done — until such board can be revived or established. If the country school is deficient, the country church must do much educational work until the school is improved — that the intellectual life of the community may not further degenerate.

A number of country churches today are performing service that properly belongs to the home, grange, school, or other institution because these institutions are very weak or temporarily out of commission. The country churches that are rendering this needed service are the ones that are succeeding best.

—*Rev. M. B. McNutt.*

Discussion

THE CHURCH KNOWN BY ITS FRUITS

The church that realizes its true mission, and at the same time can go about that mission without conveying the idea that it is something apart from the community itself, will be the most efficient church in the country community or in any other community. There is a special opportunity for the country church to identify itself with the community, as such, that the city church very often does not have. We must for convenience divide up the functions in any community and we must think of certain functions as belonging particularly to certain institutions;

but the church must realize that while it has a specific function, it is one which strikes at the very life of men and the very life of the community itself. If the church can remember this, it need not fear that it is going to lower its level and appear to the community as being simply one among several organizations of equal worth. On the other hand, if the church goes about in the community all the time announcing the fact, proclaiming from the house-tops that it is not as the other institutions of men — if it is necessary for the church to proclaim that, I think we may expect that the church will lose its influence and it ought to lose it. It is not the man who goes about saying " I am a Christian and I am better than the people who are not Christians and I am to have special privileges and special opportunities because I am a Christian " who makes the real impression on the life of the community in which he is living. It is all right for us of course to testify for Christ, to bear witness to the fact that we do believe in Him; but after all, there is a sense in which it ought to be unnecessary through word of mouth, because the life

which we live always speaks louder than the life which we talk about and the former ought to be sufficient testimony in itself. So the church which realizes that it has a specific task, which does not lose its main purpose, but which at the same time can escape the danger of putting itself into the community as something apart from the community, will be the most efficient church.

— *Dr. William H. Allison.*

LEADERSHIP IN VARIED ACTIVITIES

The personal element is the one that enters most strongly into the question of leadership in the country church. It so happens that I have the honor to be the pastor of one of the three largest rural churches in the Presbyterian denomination. Because my people find it easier to attend church in the summer, I plan to take my vacation in the fall. In order that I may keep young I have been coaching a college football team for a couple of weeks.

The people in the parish to which I was sent appeared to have lost all sense of the practice of the presence of God. Though

the county was famed for the value of its products, though the people were rich, yet they had to be brought to God. Our men's Bible class now has a membership of ninety, with an average attendance of perhaps forty. We have organized a choral society with forty or more members. The stereopticon is a valuable adjunct to the work. I use it the third Sunday night of every month. It is a mighty educator along missionary lines.

Amid great opposition we have placed a fine pipe organ in the church. There is no denominational rivalry. We have a few Quaker meeting houses. The young Quakers are rapidly being taken in hand by my church. Hicksite Quakers make fine Presbyterians. It was necessary to eliminate certain organizations which had been pestering the life of the church. The work in respect to the young men and the young women is carried on along constructive lines. But it is not by studying rural sociology alone that you can solve the problems of the rural church. You must see God first of all.

— *Rev. Alexander Thompson.*

NEED FOR RURAL SURVEYS

I have been endeavoring for something like a year past to obtain a method that will enable one to get accurate information with regard to the economic and social life of the community. Until we obtain this information I do not see how we can advance very far or very rapidly.

I desire to obtain a method that will cover different church communities. There is the church located in the open country, the church in the country village, which is generally overchurched, or a combination of the two. The area of the community may be forty or fifty or more square miles with various local centers of characteristic individuality. How are you going to get your data in such a situation? I should like to get some idea how we are going to get at the situation.

— *Rev. A. S. Clayton.*

SURVEYS ALREADY MADE

The Department of Church and Country Life of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions, in which I work, is undertaking the

task of sociological survey of country communities with the utmost care and thoroughness. We publish, about the first of the year, four monographs giving the results of such surveys in Pennsylvania, Indiana, Illinois and Missouri, and we have further work in Tennessee and Kentucky and other Southern States now in process.

We have also worked out the materials and plans for community study and we shall be glad to furnish them to any one desiring them. This work is all done in such a way as to serve workers of any denomination. The Department is undertaking precisely the work which Professor Earp has described in a section of Missouri, where, among forty of our churches, we expect to apply the principles already stated.

— Dr. Warren H. Wilson.

TOO MANY CHURCHES

The problem of the church in the small town, where there are more churches than one, differs from that of the distinctly rural church. The difficulty of the town church is not the lack of wide-awake, aggressive,

modern, efficient leadership. Men of this type are already upon the field. They are thoroughly in touch with modern methods, and appreciate the real needs of the locality. They are eager, and ready to approach the religious problems of the town from a community standpoint. The difficulty is one of operation. In every such town there are from one to five churches already established. These churches, save the first, have not been organized primarily because a careful study of the community needs seemed to demand their existence, but they have been organized because of differences of opinion, which have occasioned splits in churches that were existing, or because denominational zeal spied a chance to get a foothold for a particular church. Once upon the field, they must be maintained, even though the real religious efficiency of the true Church of God be made to suffer thereby.

No man can come into such communities and attempt to do community-wide religious work, without finding himself face to face with conditions which make his work impossible. Until the emphasis in all such re-

ligious activity is changed from " my church " and " my denomination," to *my community,* the real religious problem of the small town cannot be successfully solved.

— *Rev. A. C. Wyckoff.*

CHURCH UNION

Suppose that in Montgomery County, Maryland, or in some county in Iowa, thirty pastors of the forty churches be brought together, with a man and a woman from each congregation, making a total of 110; and that these be formed into a country church federation for the purpose of allowing any community desiring to do so to unify its churches through this federation, which might serve — as the business man would say — as a holding body. Let the local rural union church through this body have its ecclesiastical relation to the other church without becoming a denomination. I find that, in many communities, churches started as union churches have become denominational. Cannot we form a county church federation and then ask the state bodies or the national bodies to invest them with all

ecclesiastical authority of all the churches represented, and in that way provide that the members retain their denominational relationship and have a common church home in the community, where all can work? I am simply suggesting this, as the basis of a plan to overcome the present difficulties of a divided rural church.

— *Hon. Willet M. Hays.*

MISTAKEN RURAL VIEWS OF THE CITY

When I hear talk about rural communities and religious work in rural communities, I find myself going back to certain plowed fields away out in Illinois and remembering exactly how the mud used to stick to my shoes when I tramped over those fields; and I recall particularly the time when I had the honor of picking up what was, I believe, the first so-called corresponding member of the Young Men's Christian Associations, whom I found in the farthest corner of a far-off farm.

My work just now is in the city. It seems to me that it is of a good deal of importance that we should take definite steps to help the

city and the country understand one another and particularly to help the country boy at his best to understand the city boy at his best. The country boy very often goes to town with a feeling that he is going to find there those who are interested in a gay life or those who are interested in making money; but it does not ordinarily occur to him that he is going to find those who have high spiritual ideals. I have seen country boys come up to town and find there a lot of fellows, gathered in a Young Men's Christian Association, whose ideals were higher than those he knew in the country. I believe it is a good thing for the city boys in the Young Men's Christian Association to get out once in a while and meet those country boys and find out what the open air idea of life is. This movement in both its educational aspect and its religious aspect is to my mind one of the extraordinarily interesting features of this present time, and a thing that the men of the cities have reason to be interested in as much as the men of the country.

—Chancellor Elmer E. Brown.

TRAINING THE CHILDREN

Much is said about the churches' duty to the community. It is just as natural for every Christian to feel interest in his community as it is for him to pray. There never was a Christian man who read his Bible enough to be a Sunday-school teacher that did not believe in his soul that he has a duty to the community. We need no enforcement of that matter. But how shall we do the needed thing for that community? The old-fashioned way was to wait for a special experience called conversion, so marked that we could date it. But we are coming to see that the training of children has more importance than we used to think it had. We are learning that it is quite necessary and quite possible to do something that will help in large measure to predetermine the time and character of the reception our children will give to the Gospel when they come to years of personal decision. The environment is important.

Another matter to be noted is that we have all changed our notions about the Kingdom

of God. I take it that when Jesus told us to pray "Thy Kingdom come in earth," He knew what He was talking about. We were brought up to think of the Kingdom as something waiting for us when we die. But I have come, and others who have not already done so will be forced to come, to the conclusion that the Kingdom, so far as we can do anything about it, is to be actually realized in earth. That is, kindness and equality and mutual helpfulness in a spirit of love constitutes the Kingdom here and now. It grows upon me that we may safely let Heaven take care of itself. We may put away the idea that earth is simply a hatchery for young fish and they are to be removed to their proper habitat as soon as they can swim well. We shall be nearer the truth if we consider the matter in the light of a field of corn. The thing to do in June is to hoe the corn. That is all we can do. It is not time for harvests. When the harvest comes we will gather it. Just now is the hoeing time for the Kingdom of God. It is not completed and cannot be now. We must look ahead for some things that earth cannot give us. But we are to

look out *now* for human society. We are to do the kind and wise things for this life, and the next will be safe enough.

— *Dr. Alvah S. Hobart.*

Review

I will state some convictions resulting from experience as pastor of a country church for twenty-three years. We are coming to realize that the problem we are facing is not only a country church problem, it is a great religious problem of which that is a part. There is a problem in the city as in the country — the problem of indifference and irreligion — quite as acute in the city as in the country. Churches in some sections of the city are going down the same as in the country. Federation is needed in some instances in the city as well as in the country.

We need to keep in mind that the decline of religious interest is not so great over the whole country as that found in some communities. Often this is forgotten in speaking of certain sections. They are only a small part. We are in need of more information. We are generalizing without sufficient data.

Let us have more surveys carefully made.

Some readers, seeking specific suggestions for local needs, will be disappointed, but a new view-point is the great need in the country. To most of us has come a realization that conditions in the country are not hopeless. Much written in our papers and magazines on religious life in the country districts contains a depressing note. This is unfortunate, for the impression is given to the faithful workers still there that things are going from bad to worse. Rather should we inspire confidence and hope and encourage such workers to labor for the improvement of present conditions by introducing a few new agencies.

In the country the view-point of *coöperation* is needed. This is lacking in many sections. It is each one for himself. That is due in part to isolation, in part to old methods. Here the minister with a new viewpoint can exert great influence. I speak from experience. By visiting the schools of all the districts in his parish, he can talk with the teacher and pupils, learn conditions and plan with the teacher of each district for im-

provement in that district. Together the pastor and teacher can give new ideals to the people.

To accomplish this calls for country pastors with a vision. It has been said that few country pastors have the new view-point. If that be true, what is to be done for them? Two things. First, the young men in preparation for the ministry can be given this view-point in the seminary, and the teachers there can equip and send out the men for a broader and more varied service to the community. Secondly, for those now in the ministry let us have institutes modeled after the farmers' institute, or the institute conducted by the Department of Education to benefit the district school teachers, or those conducted by our Sunday-school associations for the awakening of the Sunday-school workers. If the pastors of all denominations could be brought together and experts on country church work could conduct such an institute once a year in each county, much help might be given. Not methods, but the new view-point, must be made prominent. Hold before the minds of these pastors the great work

possible for them, until they rise up and go forth with fresh courage. Many country pastors are discouraged and seek change because they have not grasped the possibilities for service in their fields.

Again we must lay emphasis on the Religious motive. Dean Bailey emphasizes the fact that the soil is holy, and the farmer is in a religious work. Is this not true also for the artisan — for the man working with his plane? Is he not working with things holy in the same sense? We should lead people to see that every occupation has an ethical and religious side as well as an economic.

All our discussion will not help us or others, until we realize, first of all, that the leaders must be filled with the Spirit of God. There is one who baptizes with the Spirit and fire. When that fire comes into the soul — the fire of love and devotion and intensity — the man will put the spirit of enthusiasm into methods already in use.

The work of the County Department of the Young Men's Christian Association is to raise up leaders in country districts, and great

blessings have come to many communities through the introduction of the county work. Not the least blessing has been the new vision given to many a pastor. There may not be as much glory associated with the county work as with the city work, but it is just as important for upbuilding the Kingdom of our Lord. We pastors need these country workers to come and stand by us and work with us. May such workers be multiplied.

Let us pray more. Both country and city need our prayers. The message of the hour is, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

Men sometimes lay hands on and ordain to the ministry those not chosen and annointed of God. Let us pray that every one sent out be annointed with God's Spirit, and then the work will prosper in every field.

— *Rev. William A. Dumont.*

IV

THE SCHOOL

This is a time of organization, not only in our great financial affairs, but we seem to be on the eve, through arbitration and other plans, of bringing about some kind of a peaceful world-organization that will do away with war. And the time has come when we should apply these principles, in the largest sense, to a general get-together movement, doing away with our denominational differences so that we can unify our church life in the open country, in the villages, and in the cities. We are weak and ridiculous in the eyes of the world because we do not have some plan of getting together. If I can do but one thing, that is, give a hope that a plan made by somebody at some time in the near future may be originated that will start the coördinating of our forces, the belittling of our differences and the enlargement of our minds for a more unified and better organized structure for doing our human

part of the work of Christianity — if I can give an impulse along that line, even though I make no suggestion myself that is practical, I shall have accomplished my larger purpose.

Our religious schools, our denominational schools as we call them, should get into a position to give religious impulses not to one student in a long course, but to all of our youth during one or two years of their school life. In other words our denominational schools, whose principal object in the hearts of those who founded them was to prepare ministers and teachers and through them build up character in the whole people, should adhere to the complete purpose of their founders. They should not only prepare ministerial leaders but they should in some way reenter the field to produce teachers, not allowing the public normal schools to crowd the church schools out of this work. As some one has expressed it, we should use these schools to put in the heart of every one who is to be a teacher in our public schools, or a lay-leader in the community, religious impulses toward altruistic service and character building. I have been a student in two

denominational schools and in one state agricultural college, and a teacher in two agricultural colleges and I know there is opportunity in our denominational schools to exert a great power along character-building lines. We are not using to good advantage our opportunities. We ought so to change the plans and purposes of our denominational schools that the pupils will go for the bulk of their informational courses to the public school system, and to the church school for special work to prepare them to be leaders and teachers. Pupils should come from every family, for say one year, and get into the spirit of the best in our churches, which may be centered in these schools. Their courses for preparing teachers, and their courses along other lines, should be coördinated with our public school system and developed to prepare teachers for all schools. I should not care if a great many of our public normal schools became in larger part informational, trade, agricultural, and commercial schools.

We need coördination in our denominational work, also, because we have interna-

tional opportunities which can best be met by a unified front. I believe we should delegate to every substantial organization designed to federate the churches all the ecclesiastical powers which belong to all the denominations — in other words, all the power that comes to us from Christ. Why divide that ecclesiastical power among denominational bodies?

While we need state coördination of these religious forces, I shall refer especially to the county as a unit. I proposed to the county of Montgomery adjoining the District of Columbia, in a meeting called for that purpose, that the farmers of Maryland, the Young Men's Christian Association and the governmental and state forces interested in country life, enter upon a campaign in cooperation with the internal forces of that county and make of it a model "country life" county. We have already begun to see visions along many lines.

In order to use figures a little more accurately in taking the county as a unit for reorganization, let us assume that a certain county is in the center of Iowa, with its approximately one hundred counties. Let us as-

sume that we have one agricultural college in the state; one agricultural high school in every ten counties, or ten in the state; and twenty consolidated and village rural schools in each county, or 2,000 in the state.

Then let the consolidated rural school in the open country, patronized by one or two hundred farm families, with its ten-acre school farm and five- or six-room building and ample meeting hall for all public purposes, provide a community store and other facilities for doing coöperative business that a farmer cannot do for himself, a teacher trained to teach agriculture as a principal, and an assistant trained to teach home economics. Establish a ten-year course, the first six years' work to be taught by three assistant teachers partly trained in a denominational college. Thus, speaking broadly, the principal and assistant principal will have fifty pupils, thirty pupils in the seventh and eighth grades, and twenty pupils in the first two high school years. These two teachers could take care of these fifty pupils from the seventh to the tenth grade for the six winter

months and spend the alternate six months most profitably in going about teaching them and helping their parents in the summer time. Combined with the winter school, these summer experiences, which take the teachers into the work of managing the farm, the farm home, and into the family and club social affairs, provide educational values quite equal to those of the six months in the winter. Then put beside this consolidated school another like area of ten acres and put your church and your minister's home there. Have as a county superintendent some man who has grown up in this consolidated rural school work, has been a student there also in an agricultural high school and in a religious college. Likewise, an assistant county superintendent similarly trained in home economics, and for leadership, who is to be superintendent of the girls' education of these twenty communities.

Add to the county service a county Young Men's Christian Association worker, a county Young Women's Christian Association worker, and also a county demonstration farmer to work with the mature farmers and

even a county home efficiency woman to work with the home makers.

The leading thought I wish to drive home is that county life has begun to recenter itself about these larger consolidated rural school centers, and that here are the vital points for centering the work of the church. The youth will here become in his school life a social unit, and in many cases an economic and a political unit. The churches cannot afford to fail to fall gradually into line, forget their denominational differences and settle down as unified bodies to work in the most vital relation to the educational, recreational, social and even the economic life of the farmers in these newly centered communities. The church should be beside the school. The county is a splendid unit for church federation. But the state and national leaders must acquiesce in and promote county church federation and local church union of all church efforts. There is need that our theological leaders devise some procedure, some kind of approved county federation, also plans for consolidated school districts, union of churches and such a union of effort

that we can have a well paid rural ministry especially trained for this work.

— *Hon. Willet M. Hays.*

Discussion

PASTOR AND COUNTRY SCHOOL

There are at least four things which the pastor may do in his own community in relation to the school problem.

First, he can visit the school, get its atmosphere, note the text-books, the studies taught and the methods used. This will enable him to influence the educational atmosphere of his community.

Second, he can infuse into education religious ideals through more intelligent preaching, writing and discussion in the homes. He can make the community see that their educational life is but a part of the larger religious problem.

Third, he can do all in his power to give Christian teachers to the school. I think the solution of the problem of teaching religion in the public school begins here. We should see that we have teachers with religious

ideals, who have a reverent attitude toward all truth.

Fourth, the pastor can aid in creating a demand for definite moral instruction in the public schools. I do not believe we can ever open up the old question of putting the Bible back in the public school, to be used for any specific sectarian teaching. There is a way in which moral instruction and the finer passages in the Bible can be used in the school without opening up the old controversy. In this way the finer Christian virtues can be developed and the growing children be made to see that their religious life is a real part of their educational life.

Fifth, by introducing better educational methods into the Sunday-school and by developing outlying district schools as social and religious centers.

Such a program calls for great intelligence, wisdom and self-sacrifice, but it will more than repay the effort.

— *Dr. Robert Wells Veach.*

THE LESSON OF THE SEED

I am very glad to supplement Assistant

Secretary Hays' views upon this subject of education in rural districts and I most heartily endorse the proposition which he has made to improve rural conditions through the church and through the public school. There is no field that is so productive of rich results as this of rural education. The great need of the country today is the teaching of natural sciences more in our public schools and in our Sunday-schools. There is no teaching that is so rich in fruitfulness as the teaching of the parables and they ought to be taught in our public schools as well as more definitely and clearly in our Sunday-schools. Take the lesson for instance of the sowing of the seed — the sowing upon good ground and upon the poor ground. See the wonderful lesson that could be made from that parable in the course — the thirty, the sixty, the hundredfold increase. Now what would that mean to the community where this is carried out scientifically? What does that mean not only spiritually but also financially? The great need of our rural districts today is financial support in church work. The public school is, of course, supported by the state, but there

is a lack of liberal support of our church work in many rural districts. This would bring to every community in which it was taught the financial support which the church so stands in need of today.

— *George T. Powell.*

V

THE GRANGE

I have no right to speak for the grange officially, but for nearly twenty years I have been a member and to some degree a student of grange history, work and purpose. I believe in it absolutely — not always in what it does, not always in its spirit as shown in local bodies, but in its essential function and purpose and meaning.

There are two methods of approach to the question which put fully is this: "By what practical means can the country church cooperate with the grange in rural community building." One method of approach is to discuss details. Here is a country church in a community where there is a grange. How may they work together for the up-building of the community? The other method of approach is to suggest the fundamental functions of the church and of the grange, if we can find out what they are, and with that as a starting point outline means of coöperation.

Unless we make up our minds that the grange has a fundamental function, I do not believe that we can really do much in the way of practical coöperation between church and grange. If the grange is an interloper in the community, if it is doing the work that the church can do, then the best thing is to get rid of the grange. My own philosophy of country life has a very significant place for the grange — using it as a type of all farmers' organizations — for it may be the farmers' union in the South or a farmers' club in some small community. I do not believe that the church can ever do for any local community or for the country as a whole all of the things that need to be done. I do not believe that the Church as a whole or in its individual parts can or should do the major work that lies before the grange as a great organized movement on behalf of rural life.

The grange in many communities has been shoved off from its main purpose and has become merely a social club. It does not hold up its fundamental task of education and its fundamental task of organizing the group power on behalf of its membership, on behalf

of countrymen as a whole, and on behalf of national uplift and advancement. But if the grange is true to its work it has a great mission.

It is very difficult to assign special tasks to the church and other special tasks to the grange. For instance — We have a church and a grange in a given community. Shall one hold sociables and the other not? Well, then, if both shall hold sociables what shall be the distinction in the two? I do not believe we can answer the question. I do not believe it is a question to be answered. The real question is, what is the principal task of the church on the one side and what is the principal task of the grange on the other side. If one institution is not doing some things that are obviously needed and the other institution can do these, I do not see why they may not be done by the institution that recognizes the need for them, although they may not, on first thought, apparently belong to it. I think we are likely to get mixed up in our thinking and acting on this question unless we keep going back to the fundamental work that is to be done by these institu-

tions. Practically this means doing the thing that most needs doing. But all the time let us work toward making the institutions "function," so that they may work out their tasks.

Let us consider these four practical, immediate questions. First, shall the church institute a grange in the communities where there is no grange? I say unhesitatingly "Yes." Some other organization may be better. I am not a protagonist of the grange as the only organization. But the development of some type of farmers' organization, whose chief purpose is that of gathering up the interests and capacities and powers of the farming class on behalf of class advancement and transmuting those same powers into terms of national welfare, is one of the fundamental tasks in our rural life.

Second, How shall the church coöperate to best advantage in communities where the grange is efficient? It seems to me that the church people ought to be leaders in the grange. If the grange is true to its purpose and the church is true to its purpose there will not be very much over-lapping. I think

the grange can well emphasize the farm side, the educational side and the economic and political questions. Coöperation consists in the people of the community being interested in both because, although they are headed in somewhat different directions, they expect to reach the same goal finally.

Third, If the grange is inefficient what can the church do to meet the community needs along the lines that should be supplied by the grange. If there is no grange and if it cannot be revived by the people, sometimes it can be revived by the minister. If that cannot be done I do not see why, as has been suggested, the church may not do many things that might ordinarily be left to the grange. There are country ministers and country churches that have settled practical questions — better roads, telephone lines, educational work. I do not see why that cannot be done by the church simply because it has to be done and the church is the only organization that can do it. But I do not believe that is the ideal method. We ought to try to bring in the organization that naturally deals with these other things and then get that organi-

zation headed right. Get its purpose and spirit right.

Fourth, Is there not danger of rivalry between the grange and the church? I remember ten years ago reading in a grange paper an article containing this, "Up in our country, the grange is rapidly taking the place of the church, and I do not see why it may not take the place of the church." Anybody who knows about the grange work knows that it has a moral purpose, its ritual being permeated with moral and religious thought; and a man cannot be a member of a grange who is at all sensitive to spiritual things without feeling that underlying it all there is a great spiritual idea. But no level-headed person believes that the grange can take the place of the church. Sometimes it is asserted that there is danger of rivalry when the grange holds its meetings on Saturday night, for people do not feel like going to church the next day. This is a detail and people ought to be wise enough and kind enough and Christian enough to work that out.

I think it is significant that the phrase "rural community building" has been used

in this topic because it implies that the grange, school, church and farmers' institute have one main purpose, which is to build up the community. Let the phrase be interpreted as signifying the building up of the Kingdom in the community. Hence it ought to mean that the grange, the farmers' institute and school as well as the church are ministers to the Kingdom. If they are not, then they must be rejuvenated or else put out of business. They are all concerned in one big job though they have different parts in the job, just as different contractors take different parts in the erection of a building.

I find myself thinking along the lines Secretary Hays has suggested, that sooner or later we must have, not a new organization, but such a group, such a federating, if you please, such a coming together, such a co-operation that we shall think of community building as a problem, and then attack it with all the forces at our command. These forces are, practically speaking, the social institutions of the community. They will over-lap to some degree in any community. But in general each will find its own task and all

will press forward together because they have just one job.

Yes, the church and the grange can cooperate. Perhaps more than in any other organizations, the leaders of the church and the leaders of the grange can forward this movement for community building and plan for this coöperative or federated endeavor. I do not know yet what is to be the nucelus around which this coöperation shall take place. The various communities are feeling their way. But I am sure it has got to come because it represents the central religious idea, that of the upbuilding of the Kingdom in each rural community, in terms of the very best thought and life of our time and in accordance with the eternal laws of life.

— *President Kenyon L. Butterfield.*

Discussion

ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH TOWARD THE GRANGE

There are good granges and bad granges. The church has a responsibility to the community as well as to the individual. If there

are wayward granges as there are wayward boys, isn't there a responsibility for the church to look after the wayward grange; and if the grange itself, back in its origin and in the minds of its best leaders, is working toward a high purpose, is not the difficulty with the wayward grange to be found in the fact that it is not true to its ideals? Doesn't this then in a way suggest the method for the church? Should the church attack the wayward grange or should the church attempt to bring out the best in the grange by appealing to its best principles? I fear in too many cases, as soon as we see the naughty grange, we proceed to chastise it if we can possibly catch it. I remember a very wise remark of a former teacher of mine who is now President of the University of Rochester. "Jesus was never embarrassed by the presence of goodness." By that he did not mean that Jesus never felt embarrassed when He came in the presence of a good person for fear his own character would be overshadowed. What he did mean was this — that when Jesus saw goodness in a man he did not attempt to discount that goodness

but recognized it as goodness. May we not simply apply this in the attitude of the ministers and churches toward the grange? When we see some feature of goodness in the grange or some other institution, let us not distrust that goodness. It seems to me that doing that — distrusting them — comes perilously near the unpardonable sin. Let us work on that which is best and develop out of that a healthy life in every aspect of the community.

— *Dr. William H. Allison.*

THE FARMER'S CLASS-CONSCIOUSNESS

The class-consciousness of the farmer and what we can make out of it is a subject that the country minister and teacher have not thought enough about. At a meeting of the American Sociological Society I heard John R. Commons says that a man ought not to be so much interested in the way he might get out of his class in order to make something of himself as in the way to make something of himself within his class. I think this principle applies to the rural church problem, to the grange and to all organizations in the

rural districts. In spite of all the jokes and jibes on the farmer, it is possible to find a farmer, even today, famed for his whiskers, proud of the fact that he is a farmer. The time is coming when, by intelligent leadership in the working out of this problem, we are going to have young men proud of the fact that they are *rural pastors*. I know some that I should not be proud of, and no one else would be.

Another matter that is of interest here is the financing of any proposition of successful coöperation and achievement in the country districts. It is sometimes urged that the farmer is not really generous about paying for things. I have been a book agent and my field was in the rural district. I found that I could always collect on a book that a farmer said he would take, and my job was to get him to say he would take it. Now I believe that the moment we make the rural farmer, a farmer who is still on the job in the country, who has not moved to the village, see that this institution we are establishing in the country has value, he will support it. The difficulty is in making it go until he sees

it. I make this suggestion to those who have control of the home missionary boards and the distribution of their funds. I should like to see at least four or five experiments made by the home missionary board in every denomination. These would involve financing a proposition in a rural district that has never yet been successfully worked, with a man at the head who sees the broader definition of the Kingdom and its possibilities in that community. He should be supported until he can prove to that community that what he has is of value; then they will support it. Now I know city churches or community churches where you have inter-denominational cleavage and too often it is in these over-churched communities that home mission funds are spent rather than in the under-churched town or village. By working in the other direction, the church might even take the lead in developing a farmer class-consciousness that would make rural church-members put off their denominational prejudices and get together.

I am very glad for all the expressions of what we call a broader definition of the King-

dom of God, and I believe the time is now here when any man or woman who is doing a necessary part of the world's work — a part that has to do with the happiness and health of people — ought to be recognized and is being recognized as a part of the organization of the Kingdom of God in this world.— *Professor Edwin L. Earp.*

A GRANGE TENT

Recently I was called to a purely rural church to lecture. When we climbed into the gallery to put up the screen I found a lot of tent poles. I asked what they meant. The pastor of the church said: "They belong to our big tent. We put it up outside for the entertainments which our grange gives. We have given some very elaborate plays. Once we had to bring them into the church when there was a heavy storm." The solution which has been worked out in that particular church makes the church and grange apparently in complete accord with each other. The secret of this success is the fact that the daughter of the pastor is very successful as an organizer. She is the lec-

turer in the grange. The pastor's family is the unifying influence between the two organizations. The next morning the wife of the pastor took me to the railroad station. When she turned back she called to the agent, "Is the library here?" I asked what she meant and she said: "It is the library for our grange. It comes to my daughter. She takes charge of it." This is the way one New Jersey church and grange are coöperating.— *Rev. William Sheddan.*

VI

THE CHURCH AND THE FARMERS' INSTITUTE

The Christian Church was established to promote Christianity in the world, to introduce into the hearts of men personal religion. In doing this it was to show, first, that man is a sinner; that the end of sin is eternal death; and that salvation from sin is by Jesus Christ. This was to be its great mission. In carrying it out, it was to utilize the revelation and teaching found in the holy Scriptures. It now points, for examples of the efficacy of the remedies it offers, to reformed men and women; and for the effect of its teaching upon society, to the care of the destitute, the restraint of evil, and the good order and general prosperity of the people wherever the Church has been established.

The Church, as an organization, is commissioned in addition to its teaching, to look after

the poor, the wretched, the helpless, the sick, the unfortunate and the sinning. It is to bind up broken hearts, to comfort those who mourn, encourage the weak, befriend the widow and the fatherless, visit the prisoner and warn those who are unruly and such as are living in sin. Through these duties faithfully taught and performed in and by the Church, it is expected that those who compose its membership will, as individuals, as merchants, farmers, lawyers, physicians, mechanics, and day laborers, exert their influence for the improvement of the schools, for the suppression of traffic in rum, for the devising of better methods of living; and that they will consider the health, the wage and the general welfare and happiness of their neighbors. If these individual Christians find that they can do more efficient work by association, then they form societies and work through them as in the organization of societies for the promotion of temperance, for the betterment of the poor, for the relief of the insane, for the erection of hospitals, infirmaries and homes for the aged and unfortunate, and similar projects, as farmers' institutes, granges and other neighborhood or-

ganizations. They will form these organizations outside of the church and conduct them not as church functions, but as the outgrowth of the teaching that the church has given and of a sense of duty to their fellows that the church has implanted in their individual hearts.

It was not originally the province of the Christian Church, as an organization, to show men how to make money, how to attain skill in the performance of manual operations, how to succeed in politics, to promote games, or to finance business undertakings. Its work was spiritual; it dealt only with essentials, with the springs of life in the individual.

Component Parts of the Church

Many of those who speak of the church doing this or that, when questioned, admit that they mean not the corporation as a body, but the preacher. Frequently where the term church is used the true meaning is had when the word "preacher" is substituted. To discuss the subject intelligently an analysis, therefore, seems to be necessary in order to avoid confusion of terms.

A local church is a composite, made up of (a) the Pastor; (b) the Session, or Ecclesiastical Court; (c) the Trustees, or Business Board; (d) the Missionary and similar Societies; (e) the Congregation or lay members; and (f) the Church as a Denomination or distinct body of believers.

Functions of These Different Elements

(1) *The Pastor.* He is the spiritual expert of the church, charged with the teaching of spiritual and moral truth. His duties in this direction are already more numerous and onerous than he can fully and satisfactorily perform. The fact that within the bounds of the parish of every country pastor there are irreligious individuals and families to be sought out and saved, as well as members of the church needing special attention and spiritual guidance, is proof that work in this direction is not completed. It is a serious question, therefore, whether the pastor's efforts along these lines should be relaxed before those resident in his community are brought within the pale of the Christian Church and before

the members of his congregation are brought to a fair realization of their responsibility for the spiritual enlightenment of mankind. There is no other man in the community specially charged or fitted by education and experience for doing the pastor's work as a spiritual teacher and adviser. Consequently, if his efforts are impeded or suspended in these respects, the church life and the community life will correspondingly suffer. This does not mean that he shall fail to encourage proper social activities in his community, or to perform other public service, either along farmers' institute or similar lines, but it does mean that he shall not devote time to these matters to the neglect of the other, and that in this country, at least, it is not his function to teach the growing of corn or potatoes or pigs. Other agents better equipped for giving this kind of instruction exist and are available.

This may be regarded by some more enthusiastic promoter of the country life movement as being a narrow view of the country pastor's sphere. It is true that it narrows his activities and responsibility mainly

and first and foremost to the lines of work for which he has been divinely chosen as well as specifically called by the congregation to whom he ministers.

One of the greatest dangers that now threatens country people through this country life or extension movement is that it may affect well-established and valuable institutions injuriously by distracting attention from their importance in community life to these newer features now being introduced. One danger that is now apparent in enlisting the country church in favor of this movement to the extent that its promoters desire is that the fundamental work for which the church exists may be minimized in the presence of these more sensational measures so popular and promising such great results. If this happens, the country pastor will lose his appreciation of the obligations and opportunities of his sacred calling to serve the congregation to which he ministers and remit his efforts for the salvation of souls, in his devotion to organizations and enterprises most valuable and useful to the community, but with the direction or success of which he,

as a minister of the gosepl, is not charged.

If a practicing physician, for example, were to leave his patients to suffer while he engaged in some other public service, no matter how important or useful in itself, he would be criticised, and justly, for having neglected his own proper function and for having assumed obligations incompatible with proper attention to those for which he was first of all responsible. If he were to do this habitually the time would soon arrive when his patients would refuse his service and seek some other physician more devoted to their interests.

In both of these cases, however, that of the minister and that of the physician, there should be a sincere desire to promote the community interest and a willingness to assist when this assistance can be given without injury to the particular set of duties for which the individual first of all and above all is responsible. It is to call attention to this limitation that I have expanded this explanation to meet possible criticism that may arise respecting my definition of the country pastor's sphere of work.

(2) *The Session, or ecclesiastical court of the church.* This is made up, in the Presbyterian denomination, of its eldership, with the pastor, and is charged with the oversight of the congregation in *spiritual* matters. The individual members of the session or other body having control of these affairs, are the agents of the pastor in carrying out his plans for the moral and spiritual development of the membership. Their functions as a session are wholly spiritual, moral and disciplinary.

(3) *The Trustees.* The trustees have charge of the secular business of the church, so far as its functions are secular. They represent the corporation in its legal aspect with relation to matters affecting its property holdings and rights and they are limited in their activities by the charter under which the organization as a religious society operates.

(4) *The Missionary Society and other societies.* These include the Sabbath-school, and various young people's societies, which are both religious and social and are not organized for business purposes or for the promotion of secular enterprises. Their service both in the congregation and as it affects the

work done at large is for the spiritual and moral uplift rather than the financial betterment of communities.

(5) *The Membership of the congregation.* As a body the congregation is religious, although the functions of the members, as individuals, are both religious, and secular.

(6) *The Church as a denomination.* This is a corporate body organized for conducting religious services. It is not organized for trade, for politics or other secular pursuits.

Coöperation with farmers' institutes.

If this analysis and statement of function is correct or even approximately so, it would then seem that coöperation of general character by the church with the farmers' institute is confined chiefly to that of and by the members as individuals rather than that by the church as an organization. Practically, this coöperation has already been effected in most communities of the United States. For the year ended June 30, 1911, 3,400,000 persons came together in farmers' institute assemblies to consider methods for rural bet-

terment and were addressed by over 1100 expert teachers in subjects relating to agriculture, domestic science and rural improvement. The institute, embracing as it does in its membership men and women of all denominations and political beliefs, is therefore essentially the Church at work in a practical way for the betterment of rural conditions. The same is true of other rural organizations of which the farmers' institute is a type.

When, therefore, the entire rural population is either associated in institute work or in horticultural societies, the grange, the farmers' union, or other rural organization relating to agriculture and country life, we shall have the coöperation for the uplift of the community that we desire and the best that has hitherto been devised. These local societies are directed by specialists thoroughly equipped for accomplishing the things that are contemplated, and they provide therefore a most effective organization and method for rural betterment. They provide a form of harmonious coöperation between the church and other rural forces thor-

oughly efficient and without any member being required to first sink his denominational preference or political belief. They should, therefore, have the encouragement and support of the church to the extent of its limitations.

It is not necessary for a church as a church to run a farm, or an orchard, or a stock barn in order to benefit rural people and improve agriculture, or to provide a swimming pool or a gymnasium for the young people of the community. Such service when needed can best be and will be performed by a community organization created specially for the purpose and it will have the coöperation of members from every church as well as of interested persons outside. Let the church spire stand for spiritual life and its betterment. If this is faithfully attended to, the members themselves will see that these other things so needful to a well-rounded rural life are supplied.

While it is the bounden duty and ought to be expected of the church *as an organization* and of its officers *as officers* to attend first of all faithfully to the moral and spiritual af-

fairs of the community, at the same time it is incumbent upon the individual members, acting either as individuals or associated with each other in organizations of secular character, to promote the particular business aims of interest to the community and engage actively in the work of improving the social conditions.

Sphere of the Pastor's Influence

The pastor's opportunity for influencing community betterment lies mainly in his faithful teaching of Scripture truth; in his visiting throughout the community, not as an agricultural expert, but as a religious teacher and spiritual adviser, influencing young and old to the practice of good morals and fair dealing; and in forming, through his teaching and by his personal life and example, ideals in Christian character to be emulated by those among whom he lives. If this is done, then the individual members of the church as they participate in the secular affairs of life will introduce into the associations that they join these same principles of morality and high ideals and thus bring to bear upon those who are not members of any Christian church

the influence of these churches, thereby creating and extending a moral sentiment throughout the community that shall promote thrift and stand for good order and the proper observance of the moral and religious principles and practices upon which civilized society is founded. In the rural districts most people are already affiliated more or less closely with some religious society or denomination. What they need is spiritual quickening; they need to be brought to feel more deeply their obligation to God and to their fellow men, to have their sympathies for and their impulses to aid the unfortunate aroused. The faithful preaching of the gospel will accomplish this and out of this the other benefits enumerated will naturally flow.

Coöperation by the Church as a Body

The church, therefore, *as a body,* can best coöperate in rural community building through and along moral, social and spiritual lines, leaving the teaching of technical business operations to the individual membership and to specialists equipped for the purpose and having expert knowledge of the methods best adapted to produce results desired.

Methods of Coöperation

There are, however, forms of coöperation among and by rural churches for the betterment of rural conditions that are proper, practicable and effective. A few of these are here suggested and others will grow out of the work as it proceeds.

(a) *The Minister's Weekly or Monthly Meeting.* This is a coming together statedly of the pastors of all the churches in the community for conference respecting the community welfare. Such association begets fraternal feeling and does much to break down the prejudice that once existed among denominations. It tends to unite the churches in the teaching of timely truth and in influencing Christian people to undertake the correcting of abuses that threaten the community life. The ministers' meeting is a most potent agency for rural betterment as well as for the spiritual development of the membership of the respective churches.

In a number of localities meetings of ministers, such as have been outlined, are now held for consultation respecting the interests

of their several congregations. Wherever this plan has been tried it has, I think, been generally satisfactory. The plan now proposed is to extend this idea to all rural communities. It is believed that if this educated body of men familiar with the conditions in their respective districts and thoroughly interested in rural betterment were to meet statedly for the discussion of the problems that confront them as rural pastors, many of these problems would speedily be solved. In any case the consideration of such matters by trained, conscientious scholars living in daily contact with rural people is not only practicable but promises as much for the ultimate solution of the question of rural betterment as any other yet proposed. It is utilizing the highest intelligence and the most unselfish body of men that the community has in studying its problems and it combines that intelligence in well digested recommendations to be followed by all.

If such a movement can be started and rural ministers of all denominations in all localities can be brought together statedly for

conference, as suggested, a great impulse will undoubtedly be given to the country life propaganda and it will have the advantage of being intelligently and harmoniously directed. I believe that the plan is entirely practicable. At all events, if country ministers, who are of all men most interested in rural development, are unwilling to unite for its betterment, it is not likely that their parishioners will do so. It is, therefore, imperative that the ministers lead the way. When they make the effort and seriously take up the work, then we may hope to see their congregations following their example.

No better body exists for getting these ministerial bodies organized and at work than the Young Men's Christian Association. Its undenominational character and its energetic and widely distributed force of capable men fit it peculiarly for undertaking this work and carrying it on to ultimate success.

(b) *Lay Leader's Meeting.* After the ministers' meeting has become established a further step in coöperation may be taken with promise of success. It consists in holding similar stated meetings by the eldership

or official lay leaders of the churches. These meetings would bring together a body of men who are officially and individually interested in the promotion of the moral and religious life of the community. Their meeting periodically will stimulate them to increased effort and to unity of action where such unity is desired, thus creating a strong body of religious leaders in each community who can be depended upon to assist in any great movement for the betterment of rural life, acting either as individuals or associated in the institute or other rural organizations.

(c) *Sabbath-school Teachers' Meeting.* At present the work of the teachers in the several churches in a community is largely disconnected and individual. If the teachers in these churches were to hold united meetings for social purposes and to discuss the problems that confront them in their work and to plan for new or community work that might be undertaken, an enthusiastic and efficient body of workers would be distributed through the country districts, unified under a common leadership and directed in matters for the general good in a way that

would be most powerful for the improvement of the moral and social life of the district they represent.

Conclusion

If ever consolidation of the churches comes, which I greatly doubt, it will not come suddenly or by force but by the slow process of intimate mingling in something of the manner that has here been indicated, until acquaintance has been formed and the points of agreement have been discovered and the non-essential character of the points of difference is realized. Quickest and best results may be achieved by some orderly, systematic method such as this, of universal application and beginning with those most favorably disposed and capable. The assembling of the rural pastors for conference will naturally be followed by regular stated meetings of the leading church officials and of those who instruct the young of the community in morals and religion — the teachers in the Sabbath-schools. Then as the laity or individual members of the churches intermingle and participate in the farmers' institutes, the

agricultural society, and the rural clubs, practical coöperation will be secured by the entire body of each congregation with every other congregation in the work of community building, both secular and religious. Thus the essentials of coöperation are had and virtual concert of effort secured. Should we not strive for this practical coöperation first and now, leaving matters of uniformity of name and denominational consolidation to come in with the millennium if they shall be deemed desirable and advantageous then?

The church may justly be regarded as the center or heart of rural life. If it performs its functions in a proper and healthful way its pulsations will beat steadily and the spiritual forces driven by its power into every part of the community will nourish and upbuild the social body in all its parts. In doing this it need not abandon its position as a spiritual teacher, either in whole or in part, for some side line promising more immediate and directly visible results. It will accomplish more by remaining steadfastly in its place year in and year out, preaching, not the art of acquiring temporal wealth and

material property, but how men may obtain each for himself the unsearchable riches of Christ. By rigidly adhering to this its divine function, it will aid rural life most certainly and effectively, and out of it will most speedily come the social, material and spiritual uplift that we all so earnestly desire.

Hon. John Hamilton.

UNION MINISTERS' MEETINGS

In my recent correspondence, I have received requests from three different counties to speak at county union ministers' meetings of all denominations; and the request in every case came from the county secretary who had succeeded in getting the ministers together. We are much encouraged to believe that the movement is in progress and that the work of the Kingdom of God is going to be organized increasingly on the county basis, as *a county-wide campaign for righteousness.*

— *Professor G. Walter Fiske.*

VII

LEADERSHIP

The county work or the rural work of the Young Men's Christian Association has to do with just such conditions as have been described. The fundamental principle recognized by this department is that leadership is the solution of every problem. Therefore we give ourselves untiringly to the discovery, development and training of leaders. We try to discover, in the various communities in which we work, the tasks that ought to be done and we recognize the fact that everybody in the community has something to give in service. Now no man will work well along all lines. Some men will perhaps do a lot of things fairly well; but a man in these times must be a specialist to attain great success. It has been stated over and over again that one great key to success is the recognition of the fact that the Kingdom of God is bigger than any one denomination; and the County Work Depart-

ment of the Young Men's Christian Association is not so much concerned in the projection of a new institution into the rural community as it is that the fundamental organizations of country life such as the home, the church and the school shall unite as far as possible and do their work properly. Therefore, we attempt to establish a common platform upon which all these agencies can and do get together. The best thing about this country work is that it works, it delivers the goods. It is finding men who see the vision of the possibility of what can be done with their own lives in a natural way, if they are willing to interpret these lives unselfishly and throw them alongside the lives of somebody who needs help. We sometimes find a man who has been a consistent church-goer but who has not found adequate expression for the thing he can do best for the up-building of the Kingdom of God. He probably sits in the same pew Sunday after Sunday, year in and year out. He probably is pointed out to the younger generation as a man of unquestioned integrity; but as an aggressive and dominant

force for the extension of the Kingdom of God he has been a failure. Then through the county work there comes to him some day a suggestion that he can use some special talent which God has given him in a specific way. That man is suddenly aroused from his lethargy and linked up to the needs of the community, thus releasing a new force for the Kingdom and the community. In many towns men have gathered together and eliminating denominational differences have conducted a social survey for that community; they have made a chart of community needs, just as plain as the architect's blueprint. And when they have shown to all the men in town what needs to be done in the erection of a community structure — one that will stand the efficiency test — and assigned definite tasks to definite men, the men respond. The paper hanger does not attempt to do the plumbing nor the plumber the painting, but many a man who up to this time has not been considered as a real aggressive force finds opportunity for the expression of real community interest. Such an alignment would put in his right place the country edi-

tor already referred to who was doing more for his community than some ministers.

A Task for every Man.

He was the station agent on one of the western roads — a good man, they said, with a sort of negative goodness. His attitude was right on moral questions and he attended church services regularly. No one could charge him with doing anything wrong and, as in the case of so many other good men, no one was conscious of his ever doing anything aggressively right. He was an average church member, but in many respects was like the man of whom his boy said when asked if his father was a Christian, "Yes, but I guess he isn't working very hard at it."

At various times he had tried to teach a Sunday-school class of boys but had met with indifferent success — he had been unable to establish a point of contact. Other forms of Christian service he tried and succeeded only fairly well. There was nothing in the regular activities of the church that he could do well for, as he said — he didn't know how.

One day the county secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association said to him, "There is a distinct task in this town for every man and a man for every task and the business of the Young Men's Christian Association is to tie the task to the man and the man to the task. In other words, Bill, there is some one thing that you can do for this community and the Kingdom of God better than any other man in town.

"What is it?" said Bill.

"You can gather about you a bunch of boys one night a week and teach them applied electricity. You are a telegraph operator and you can take the instruments apart, put them together, put up the wires, set up the batteries and teach these boys how to send and receive messages."

"Would that be Christian service?" said Bill.

"It certainly would," said the secretary, "if you would undertake it in the spirit of Christ and promise to stay by the job in spite of difficulties."

Bill thought it over carefully and agreed to undertake it. Said he, "The secretary is

right; I can do this one thing better than any other man in town and perhaps this is the way for me to get into the lives of some boys who are not very much interested in Sunday-school but who need the leadership of a Christian man, nevertheless."

No man can accept leadership of this character lightly, and Bill prayed that his contact with these boys might do more for them than teach them applied electricity.

He had his troubles. The night of the first meeting eighteen boys were present but after the newness began to wear off the attendance dwindled and some nights there would be only a few. One night no one came but this leader was not discouraged, *for had he not accepted this leadership as a calling from God and was he not the only man in town who could do this service?* He discovered that leadership of this kind involved real sacrifice and some of his social and fraternal relations had to be given up. More than once he was tempted to quit, but he remembered the basis on which he had undertaken this work and stuck to his post.

Presently the boys began to ask themselves

and each other why their leader did so much for them and why he turned his back on social engagements that they knew had been dear to him in order to be with them. One day one of them asked him and when Bill opened up his big heart and told him the real reason — that he loved them, with a strong, manly love, this boy told the other boys and one by one these boys said, "I want to be the kind of a man that Bill is." Several have taken a stand for the Christian life and joined the church and all of them believe in Bill and Bill's religion.

By the subtle process known as character contagion, Bill has transformed the lives of these boys and the impact of his consecrated personality upon the telegraph class has accomplished three things: First, it has changed the ideals of these boys so that they too want to help the other fellow. Second, it has raised the rural standard of the town so that material conditions in the home, church and school are improved; for the spirit of service is contagious. Third, it has given the man who was willing to pay the price a vision of Christian service that he never dreamed was

possible. "I am getting out of it vastly more than I've put into it," is his testimony. He has been changed from an ordinary church member to a dominant factor in the extension of the Kingdom of God. And any man can have this same experience if he will *find his job and stick to it.*

— *Albert E. Roberts.*

REACHING THE BOYS

I am particularly interested in one method of attacking this country problem which is often omitted from discussions because of the modesty of the men who are doing the work. I served for a short time as country pastor in one of the counties of Massachusetts, and for a much longer time I have been teaching the Bible to boys, a large proportion of whom come from these country districts. For the last three years, I have served on our County Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations. In that movement I believe we have the most practical attempt that has been made to solve the country problem, so far as it concerns the boys who are going to make our men.

The great problem in the country district is to find men who will take the initiative in developing the social and religious life of the community along better lines. I have no word of criticism of the country pastor. I have worked with these men, I know their problems and sympathize with them; but what is needed in the country is more laymen who will realize their responsibility to the young men and boys in their community, and put forth an honest effort to fulfill it. By beginning at the bottom with the boys, and training them to a sense of community obligation and service, not merely along religious but also along social lines, we are developing the leaders of the not distant future.

When boys are brought together in banquets where good fellowship may become hilarious but remains always clean and wholesome, they learn that social life can be jovial without being low. When they are set at work helping their fellows and contributing in various lines to the betterment of the community, they are being trained for leadership both in town affairs and in the life of the church. This is a union movement, which

brings the different denominations together; it is a practical movement because it constantly presents something definite which needs to be done; it is a movement full of promise because it develops along the right lines powers which will either make or mar the future of our country life. I believe that all pastors ought to study this movement, for it certainly presents one of the most promising contributions toward the solution of our country problem.

— *Professor James McConaughy.*

LEADERS IN SOCIAL STUDY

It seems to me that in some of our Connecticut rural communities it might be a perfectly feasible plan to institute social study classes. They should be formed with the object of studying carefully the social problems of the rural community, with a view to putting into operation some definite program of work which would directly or indirectly profit the whole of that community. The greatest need of these classes will be that of competent leadership. Possibly the Association may be able to furnish trained men in

this department who would make competent organizers and teachers until the local organization is able to conduct its study alone. But the work at its inauguration needs a specialist.

The need of social study classes is in proportion to the need of community improvement. Many country villages are divided up into ecclesiastical fragments which are difficult to unite, but if a real interest is taken in social regeneration of the place, the whole community becomes partaker of the benefit.

Such social improvement as we are working toward requires for its success the united impulse and inspiration of the entire Christian community, and if it should be fortunate enough to secure this, it may draw the people in our towns closer together in thought and action, and raise in them a healthy social and moral ambition.

— *Rev. A. T. Gesner.*

VIII

A GENERAL REVIEW

The fact that the chief subject of discussion is, "The Country Church," indicates what has been confirmed by the various contributions that the Church is recognized as the dominant factor in the problem of the rural community. On the other hand, the fact that the discussion has been brought about under the auspices of a specific department of the Young Men's Christian Association indicates that the Church for some reason has not adequately fulfilled this function, a fact so frankly conceded by most of the writers. It should be stated, however, at the outset, that while some justly keen criticisms of the Church's methods (or lack of methods) in this field have been presented, yet on the whole there is manifest a sincere desire to help the Church to master its problem in the rural districts.

Again we may affirm that a great deal has

been accomplished in the way of finding out what the problem of the country church is. I will restate the points briefly.

1. *The needs of the rural districts* are pretty well classified as economic, social and religious; yet these should be more clearly defined by workers who are capable of making rural community surveys and securing accurate scientific information so that the country ministers and other workers will know what is best to do in any given case. The preceding chapters show that a good beginning has been made in this direction.

2. *The problem of leadership in the rural church* and how it should be trained has been pretty clearly stated. While perhaps seven-tenths of the ministerial students in our theological seminaries are from the rural districts, yet it is a fact that few of them take up the country pastorate as a definite life work. Therefore it seems absolutely necessary that the Church, as a whole, radically change its policy of training leadership for the country problem. Three ideas have been suggested. (1.) The agricultural colleges, in some cases, could easily and with profit give courses

directly relating men to church leadership in the country parishes. (2.) The theological seminaries should give courses in rural sociology and practical church polity in these fields. (3.) The strong men now manning the county work of the Young Men's Christian Association could be ordained to perform the functions of a minister in certain cases, or be promoted to the leadership of the country parish, using the county work department as a training school for this field.

3. *Another advance made by this discussion is in more clearly defining the factors of community building* in the rural districts and the function of each in the process. Those factors are: the colleges of agriculture, the federated church, the grange, the farmers' institutes, the consolidated, socialized district school, and the country Young Men's Christian Association.

While these community factors, at times and in places, show group rivalry and produce social friction, yet they may all, under statesmanlike leadership by the Church, be coördinated into a movement for community solidarity that will master many of

the difficulties, economic and social, which now often seem to the isolated worker insurmountable.

4. Through the entire discussion sounds a note of optimism, due to the facts of achievement already made in this field. Among the participants are men who have made country parishes distinguished by their splendid leadership. These are the men who see with broad vision the national, racial, and as one has put it, the *cosmical* phases of the rural problem the Church is facing, and there is reason for the hope that the Church will soon be adequately at work in this most difficult yet most fruitful field. To this end it seems to me that we should make a special appeal for strong men to volunteer for country work as we do for any other difficult field of strategic importance in building up the Empire of Jesus Christ; and also we should appeal to the Home Mission Boards of the various denominations of the Church to make provision for the support of these men in this difficult field, until they can develop adequate self-support in their respective country

parishes, which should be real social centers of service.

— *Professor Edwin L. Earp.*

LIST OF DELEGATES TO THE COUNTRY CHURCH CONFERENCE, HELD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE COUNTRY WORK DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS, NEW YORK, 1911.

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E. L. ALLEN, County Secretary Young Men's Christian Associations of Westchester County, N. Y.
MISS MARY L. ALLEN, Secretary of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association.
DR. WILLIAM H. ALLISON, Dean Colgate Theological Seminary.
REV. W. L. ANDERSON, Pastor of the First Congregational Church of Amherst, Mass.
REV. R. H. M. AUGUSTINE, Pastor Hanover (N. J.) Presbyterian Church.
MRS. R. H. M. AUGUSTINE.
W. B. BAILEY, Assistant Professor Political Economy of Yale University and Instructor in Sociology of Yale Divinity School.
WILLIAM H. BAXLEY, County Secretary Young Men's Christian Associations of Westchester County, N. Y.
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JOHN R. BOARDMAN. New York representative of Goodwill Farm.
REV. W. T. BOULT, Rural Preacher.
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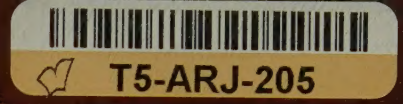
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